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# FOUNTAINS OF JOY; or, “BY WATER AND BLOOD”

BY

THE REV. FREDERICK A. HOUCK

*Author of*

*“Our Palace Wonderful,” “The Life of St. Gerlach,”  
“The Angels, Good and Bad,” “The Palace  
Beautiful,” “Godward,” etc., etc.*

“Thou hast visited the earth, and plentifully watered it;  
Thou hast many ways enriched it.” (Ps. 64, 10.)

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*This book is gratefully  
dedicated*

TO MY BELOVED PARENTS

WHO TAUGHT ME  
IN ALL THINGS  
TO SEEK GOD



## CONTENTS

### FIRST PART—WATER

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| INTRODUCTION . . . . .                            | 3    |
| CHAPTER   |      |
| I. ORIGIN AND DISTRIBUTION OF WATER . . . . .     | 10   |
| II. WATER AND THE EARTH'S CONTOUR . . . . .       | 14   |
| III. WATER AND THE EARTH'S TEMPERATURE . . . . .  | 20   |
| IV. A FEW FORMS AND CONDITIONS OF WATER . . . . . | 26   |
| 1. The Clouds . . . . .                           | 26   |
| 2. The Rain . . . . .                             | 32   |
| 3. The Dew . . . . .                              | 36   |
| 4. The Hoar Frost . . . . .                       | 38   |
| 5. The Snow . . . . .                             | 40   |
| 6. Ice and Icebergs . . . . .                     | 45   |
| V. DRINKING WATER . . . . .                       | 50   |
| VI. FLOWING WATER . . . . .                       | 56   |
| 1. The Brook . . . . .                            | 56   |
| 2. The Creek . . . . .                            | 60   |
| 3. Cataracts and Waterfalls . . . . .             | 63   |
| 4. The River . . . . .                            | 66   |
| VII. THE OCEAN . . . . .                          | 71   |
| VIII. REVERIE . . . . .                           | 76   |

## CONTENTS

## SECOND PART—SACRAMENTAL WATER

|   | PAGE       |
|---|------------|
| <b>INTRODUCTION . . . . .</b>   | <b>89</b>  |
| <b>CHAPTER</b>  |            |
| <b>I. WATER AND RELIGION . . . . .</b>  | <b>92</b>  |
| <b>1. Water as Symbol of Religious Truths . . . . .</b>                           | <b>92</b>  |
| a. In the Old Testament . . . . .   | 92         |
| b. In the New Testament . . . . .   | 95         |
| <b>II. HOLY WATER AS A SACRAMENTAL . . . . .</b>                                  | <b>107</b> |
| <b>1. The Blessing of the Font . . . . .</b>                                      | <b>108</b> |
| a. Easter and Pentecost Water . . . . .   | 110        |
| b. Baptismal Water . . . . .  | 110        |
| <b>2. The Ritual Blessing of Holy Water Used<br/>        on Sundays . . . . .</b> | <b>121</b> |
| <b>III. THE USES AND EFFECTS OF HOLY WATER . . . . .</b>                          | <b>128</b> |
| <b>1. In General . . . . .</b>  | <b>128</b> |
| <b>2. In Particular . . . . .</b>   | <b>131</b> |
| a. Before Mass . . . . .  | 131        |
| b. At the Church Door . . . . .   | 133        |
| c. In the Home . . . . .  | 135        |
| d. For the Benefit of the Sick . . . . .  | 137        |

## THIRD PART—THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>I. THE PRECIOUS BLOOD—A GIFT TO MAN-KIND . . . . .</b>                               | <b>143</b> |
| <b>II. GOD'S GREATEST GIFT TO MAN . . . . .</b>   | <b>148</b> |
| <b>III. THE SUPERABUNDANT PRICE OF MAN'S<br/>REDEMPTION . . . . .</b>                   | <b>154</b> |
| <b>IV. THE GREATEST EVIDENCE OF GOD'S LOVE—<br/>THE SHEDDING OF HIS BLOOD . . . . .</b> | <b>163</b> |

## CONTENTS

ix

| CHAPTER   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| V. THE PRECIOUS BLOOD AND THE CHURCH .                            | 182  |
| VI. THE PRECIOUS BLOOD AND THE SACRA-<br>MENTS . . . . .          | 187  |
| 1. The Sacramental System . . . . .                               | 187  |
| 2. The Holy Eucharist . . . . .                                   | 197  |
| a. The Sacrifice of the Mass . . . . .                            | 197  |
| b. The Eucharistic Presence . . . . .                             | 209  |
| c. Holy Communion . . . . .                                       | 217  |
| 3. The Sacrament of Baptism . . . . .                             | 229  |
| VII. DEVOTION TO THE PRECIOUS BLOOD . . . . .                     | 244  |
| 1. Glorifies the Holy Trinity . . . . .                           | 244  |
| 2. Consoles and Rejoices the Human Heart .                        | 260  |
| 3. A Few Forms of Devotion and Indul-<br>genced Prayers . . . . . | 264  |
| CONCLUSION . . . . .  | 270  |



## FIRST PART—WATER



# FOUNTAINS OF JOY, OR “BY WATER AND BLOOD”

## INTRODUCTION

The lullaby of peace and rest,  
Is softly crooned by summer rain;  
But he whom thus the clouds have blest,  
Hath listened to diviner strain.

The murmuring brook has tuneful tongue,  
There's music too in mountain streams;  
But he who hears the streamlet's song  
Hath heard its cadence in his dreams.

Old Ocean's anthem, deep, sublime,  
Resounds in every surging sea:  
Who listens hears on shores of time  
The beatings of eternity.

—Anonymous.

IT is in the metaphorical or religious sense only that the title *Fountains of Joy* may be applied to this little treatise. We find the use of metaphors and symbolism in vogue among all peo-

ples. Man is by nature prone to speak of inert things in terms of life. To this inborn tendency may be ascribed the universal use of the term "living water." And, indeed, of all inanimate things water in the liquid state has the greatest resemblance to creatures possessing life. We Americans in particular, because of a deep affection for our brooks, lakes and seashores, easily associate bodies of "living water" with common experiences in human life. This life-like quality of water in motion makes it suitable to an endless variety of themes. An attempt is here made to contemplate water in its various forms and uses as a means of directing the mind and heart onward and upward to the Source of all true joy.

Many of the thoughts and metaphors here used have been drawn from the writings of poets and physicists, who describe water in beautiful language or scientific terms. Several of these authors are quoted at length. The book presents little that is new and original. The only reason for publishing it is that its facts and truths have been a source of perennial joy to the author, and that they may become such to others.

Although the book has not been written or compiled in order to prove the existence of an

all-good God, still even the religiously indifferent, I trust, will be prompted by its perusal to give thanks for the divine favors here described. These will then become to him "fountains of joy."

The subject-matter treated belongs to the things that are common to all; but when we trace the common gifts to their true and final Source, they will suggest thoughts that glorify the Creator. We can thus divest them of their commonness and elevate them to a high and noble plane. This is done in regard to water in the First Part.

The Church endows water with a supernatural efficacy, which enables it to stimulate devotion and increase the love of God. This is shown in the Second Part of the book, where the nature and effects of Holy Water are described.

The Third Part treats of the Precious Blood that redeemed the world. Jesus Christ, in whose honor the book is written, loved to dwell on the common gifts to mankind. He came, however, "not by water only, but by water and blood." There are numerous works that treat specifically of the Precious Blood. Let it suffice, then, that a few suggestions are offered which may easily associate the contemplation of water with

the Precious Blood and thus make both a source of supernatural joy on earth and of merit for Heaven. The quotations ascribed to Father Faber in this part of the book are taken from his classic work entitled *The Precious Blood*. I dare say nothing more sublime and devotional on the subject is to be found; it were well if this rhapsody on the Price of our Salvation became the *vade mecum* of every devout Christian.

The purpose of *Fountains of Joy*, therefore, is to help the reader to acquire a deeper appreciation of the Precious Blood by contemplating the God of Nature, the God of Grace, and the God of the Sacraments. These truths are an exuberant and perennial fountain of joy springing up into life everlasting.

Throughout this book the fact that God exists is supposed. However, should the reader desire proofs for the existence of God, or a fuller explanation of Divine Providence, he will find them in the author's *Godward* and *Our Palace Wonderful*. The latter book is obtainable in its sixth edition.

The Biblical account of the origin and distribution of water is nowise contradicted by the results of scientific research. Water is a composite formed of two parts of hydrogen gas and

one part of oxygen gas. This can be shown easily: If you were to pass an electric spark through a small pan of water, into which a few drops of sulphuric acid had been poured, the water would be separated into its constituent gases, which may then be caught and conducted into separate jars. These gases are not only different from water, but also from one another! If we inhale a little of the one kind of gas we begin to feel dizzy; a large draught might even prove fatal. On the other hand, we find that the gas in the remaining jar facilitates breathing. Thus we find that water consists of two gases, one of which may be harmful, while the other is essential to plant life.

Then, too, water in its various states, according to the view put forward by Professor H. E. Armstrong in 1908, seems to be a compound of three different hydros: " $H_2O$  being gaseous water,  $(H_2O)_3$  being ice, while liquid water is a mixture of these, viz.:  $(H_2O)_2$ . Although," he adds, "it is generally admitted that water is not a uniform substance, but a mixture of units of different degrees of molecular complexity; the degree of complexity and the variety of forms is probably under-estimated, and little or no attention has been paid to the extent to which alterations produced by dissolving

substances in it may be the outcome and expression of changes in the water itself." (Alfred Russell Wallace, *The World of Life*, p. 394.)

Water, in all probability, exists on, in, and around the earth in much the same quantity that it had when the Lord God Almighty first created and distributed it. The surface of our earth has a total area of 197,000,000 square miles. Of this vast area 140,000,000 square miles are covered with water, leaving 57,000,000 square miles of dry land.

"According to the best recent estimates," says Mr. Alfred E. Wallace, "the land area of the globe is 0.28 of the whole surface, and the water area 0.72. But the mean height of the land above the sea-level is found to be 2250 feet, while the mean depth of the seas and oceans is 13,860 feet; so that though the water area is two and a half times that of the land, the mean depth of the water is more than six times the mean height of the land. This is, of course, due to the fact that lowlands occupy most of the land-area, the plateaus and high mountains a comparatively small portion of it; while, though the greatest depths of the ocean about equal the greatest heights of the mountains, yet over enormous areas the oceans are deep enough to submerge

all the mountains of Europe and temperate North America, except the extreme summits of one or two of them. Hence it follows that the bulk of the oceans, even omitting all the shallow seas, is more than thirteen times that of the land above sea-level; and if all the land surface and ocean floors were reduced to one level, that is, if the solid mass of the globe were a true spheroid, the whole earth would be covered with water about two miles deep." (*Man's Place in the Universe*, pp. 225 sq.)

Or, again, we can gain a clearer notion of the existent quantity of water by comparing the areas and volumes of the two principal oceans: "The Pacific Ocean covers 68,000,000 square miles; the Atlantic 30,000,000 square miles. To stow away the contents of the Pacific it would be necessary to fill a tank one mile long, one mile wide, and one mile deep, every day for 440 years. The Atlantic averages a depth of not quite three miles. A tank to contain its waters would have each of its sides 430 miles long." (*Our Young People*, Jan., 1921.)

## CHAPTER I

### ORIGIN AND DISTRIBUTION OF WATER

WE read that the Apostles went forth from the cenacle on the first Pentecost Sunday and enthusiastically proclaimed the wonderful works of God. The newly-acquired *gift of knowledge* enabled them to realize that all the works of God are wonderful. As no human power could create an angel, so no human power could produce the lowliest creature in the universe. All of God's works are great because an almighty power was required to create them.

This book is an attempt at stimulating the *gift of knowledge*—a divine gift bestowed not on the Apostles only; the infused habit of knowledge is imparted to the soul of every Christian; this gift of the Holy Ghost is received in Baptism; the Sacrament of Confirmation increases and strengthens it. It is incumbent on the Christian, therefore, to exercise this latent gift, which sheds a supernatural light upon the order of nature. In the brightness of the gift of knowledge we can discern

additional reasons for the credibility of those truths that came from above by revelation. And the truths of nature and science shine forth with a peculiar beauty in the splendor of its supernal light. Thus the God of nature is revealed more and more clearly in the works of His hand.

Jesus Christ came "by water and blood." He came "by water," since He taught us to look upon water as one of the Heavenly Father's gifts. Again He compared the graces He merited and the doctrine He revealed with water. Let us, then, enter upon a contemplation of this wonderful creature of God—water. Water can become a source or fountain of joy only in so far as we know it in its various forms, states, and uses.

When contemplating the earth under the aspect of concentric spheres, we find that within its centre there is a vast nucleus of hot, molten substances; surrounding these is the hard crust called the lithosphere, which is covered in great part by the hydrosphere; finally, we have the atmosphere, which envelops the earth like a blanket. A greater knowledge of the hydrosphere, albeit superficial, will prove interesting.

The ancients considered water one of the

four constituent and fundamental elements of the universe. Though we know now that water is not an element, everyone will readily concede that it is an important factor in the economy of Nature. This composite is no less essential to animal life than it is to the life of plants, shrubs, and trees. The sacred writer gives water the first place when mentioning "the principal things necessary for the life of men" (Ecclus. 39, 31). Were this gift of God annihilated, the earth would probably become as barren as the moon in a short time.

We read that in the beginning God said: "Let there be a firmament made amidst the waters: and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made a firmament, and divided the waters that were under the firmament from those that were above the firmament. . . . God also said: Let the waters that are under the heaven be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear. And it was so done. And God called the dry land, earth; and the gathering together of the waters, He called seas. And God saw that it was good. . . . Darkness was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved over the waters. . . . On the fifth day God said: Let the waters bring forth the creeping creatures having life, and

the fowl that may fly over the earth. And God created the great whales, and every living and moving creature which the waters brought forth" (Gen. I, 20 sqq.). In this brief narrative the inspired writer gives us an account of the origin and main purposes of water.

"Lord of immensity sublime!  
Who, lest the waters should confound  
Thy world, didst them in earliest time  
Divide, and make the skies their bound;  
Framing for some, on earth below,  
For others, in the heavens a place;  
That, tempered thus, the sun's hot glow  
Might not thy beauteous works efface."

—The Day Hours:  
Hymn for Sunday Vespers.

## CHAPTER II

### WATER AND THE EARTH'S CONTOUR

IT is difficult to give concrete shape and form to an imaginary globe like the earth that would be without water. Our earth owes its charming beauty, endless variety of contour, picturesque grandeur and ever-changing scenery to the all-pervading and highly adaptable element of water. How barren and desolate the few areas of the earth's surface that lack this element! The great deserts are uninhabitable because they are without water.

"It is in its three states—solid, liquid, and gaseous—that water exerts its most continuous and effective powers; and it is enabled to do this because, though each of these states has its own limited range of temperature, they yet overlap, as it were, and can therefore act in unison. Thus within the narrow limits of temperature adapted to organic life we have both ice and water-vapor, as well as liquid water, in almost continuous action. Through dew, mist, and rain, water penetrates every fissure of the

rocks; through the carbonic-acid gas dissolved in it, the rocks are slowly decomposed; by the expansion of water between 39° and 32° F. it freezes in the upper parts of the fissures, and when the temperature continues to fall, the further expansion during ice-crystallization forces the rocks asunder." (Wallace, *The World of Life*, p. 396.)

When we recall to mind that from the dawn of creation much the same climatic conditions prevailed as do now, we begin to appreciate the solicitous care of Providence in preparing the earth's surface by means of water for the various forms of life that were to inhabit it. The process has been going on continuously and designedly. Even the constant accumulation of ice and snow in the far north and south from the very beginning had a definite purpose. The vast icebergs and snow fields in polar regions and great altitudes form perennial glaciers which take up immense quantities of debris. Eventually the entire mass is carried to other lands. As these glaciers move along, because of their enormous weight, they crush the rocks beneath them into gravel and sand. Often they grind out deep valleys and thus determine future water-courses. Many a fair lake basin owes its origin to glaciers.

Ice, or water-action on a large scale is going on perpetually in every continent of the globe. Water in one form or another "is the chief factor in producing that infinite variety of contour of the land surface—level plains, gentle slopes, beautifully rounded downs, wave-like undulations, valleys in every possible variety, basin-shaped, trough-shaped, bounded by smooth slopes, or rugged precipices—straight or winding, and often leading up into the very heart of grand mountain scenery, with their domes and ridges and rocky peaks, their swift-flowing streams, rushing torrents, dark ravines, and glorious cascades." (*Wallace, The World of Life*, p. 396.)

Colorado, for example, affords many striking evidences of the erosive action of water. A short distance to the north of Manitou, in the vicinity of Colorado Springs, is Monument Park, a place rich in natural glens, grottos, cascades, and water-falls. This Park is noted chiefly for its grotesque formations of white and red sandstone! The Dutch Wedding is the suggestive name of a group of sandstone pillars near the entrance. These rocks, as well as the other natural formations in Monument Park, have been moulded into fantastic shapes by the attrition of water. Here may be seen

many curiously shaped columns of sandstone, scattered in picturesque profusion, from the enormous portal of the enclosure to the lofty crags that rise on either hand.

The Anvil has its name from the close resemblance it bears to a blacksmith's *sine qua non*. It is a solid monolith about 100 feet high. The cap which surmounts its summit is not of a foreign substance, as might be the case if Colorado were situated in the Frigid Zone. The upper portion was able to maintain its proper place because this part of the anvil escaped the erosive action of water. The many high columns of stone in Monument Park, some of which are frail and time-worn, are a convincing proof that Colorado has had no violent earthquake since their origin.

In the vicinity of Manitou is situated Balanced Rock, which forms a striking feature of the west approach to the Garden of the Gods. Although weighing hundreds of tons, it is so nicely poised on its pedestal that a strong wind is able to rock it to and fro. It is a solid block of red granite about forty feet high and twenty feet in diameter. The first impression upon entering the Garden of the Gods, at night, is uncanny and weird. The Siamese Twins stand near the entrance and seem to welcome the visi-

tor to the wonderful scenes that Nature has here provided. The Simpleton is another of the monstrosities to be seen in this geologist's paradise. Strange grotesque figures may be seen on all sides. Mammoth caricatures of animals crouch and cringe as if threatening to make a spring; further on, a battlemented wall conjures up the image of a medieval castle; here a cluster of slender spires recalls the ruins of a church edifice; there a leaning tower threatens to fall and block the way. Some of the many pillars and cathedral-shaped rocks rise to a height of one hundred or more feet, and have an average diameter of eight to ten feet.

Similar stone and rock formations are to be found in other mountainous regions of the globe. They owe their origin to the "physical and chemical properties of water—that simple and unappreciated element which still abounds in mysteries that puzzle men of science. Without water in its various forms and powers, not only would life on the earth be impossible, but unless it had existed in the vast profusion of our ocean-depths, and been endowed with its less familiar powers and forces, the whole world, instead of being a constantly varying scene of beauty—a very garden of delights for the enjoyment of all the higher faculties of man,

would have been for the most part a scene of horror, perhaps the sport of volcanic agencies of disruption and upheaval, modified only by the disintegrating effects of sun and wind-action." (Wallace, *The World of Life*, p. 396.)

Science, moreover, teaches us that the habitable portion of the earth's surface has been covered with soil by water. The solvent and erosive action of this restless compound gradually prepared the hard and barren surface of the globe for plants and animals. Thus, by means of water, did the Heavenly Father provide a temporal home for us, His children.

## CHAPTER III

### WATER AND THE EARTH'S TEMPERATURE

THE land area of the earth is little more than one-fourth of the area occupied by the seas and oceans. Since the human family is constantly growing in number, and the habitable land-area remains the same, one might be tempted to think that the water of the earth ought to have been assigned a smaller area than it occupies; still, "even if we had enough water on the land for all the wants of plants and animals, but had no great oceans, it is almost certain that the earth could not have produced and sustained the various forms of life which it now possesses; for, the effect of the oceans is twofold: Owing to the great specific heat of water, that is, its property of absorbing heat slowly but to a large amount, and giving it out with equal slowness, the surface-waters of the oceans and seas are heated by the sun so that by the evening of a bright day they have become quite warm to a depth of several feet. But air has much less specific heat than water; a

pound of water in cooling one degree being capable of warming four pounds of air one degree; but as air is 770 times as light as water, it follows that the heat from one cubic foot of water will warm more than 3000 cubic feet of air as much as it cools itself. Hence the enormous surface of the seas and oceans, the larger part of which is within the tropics, warms the whole of the lower and denser portions of the air, especially during the night." (Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 236.)

The ocean currents play an important part in the distribution of heat and water. These currents carry the absorbed heat of the tropical sun to the temperate, and even to the arctic zones. Many countries, for example, are rendered habitable and fertile by the Japan and Indian Ocean currents which otherwise would suffer greatly from the low temperature of the arctic winter. The great Gulf Stream, laden with the heat of the Tropics, laves the shores of Western Europe, and more especially those of the British Isles, and thus moderates the rigor of the winters in that part of the world: while, on the other hand, the cold current from the Greenland Sea and Baffin Bay, which streams past Newfoundland and the Atlantic shore of North America, materially lowers the

climatic temperature of Canada and the New England States.

The climatic influence of this perennial movement of large areas of water through their leading currents can scarcely be overrated. Owing to these moderators of temperature a country bordering on a sea or ocean commonly has seasonal changes that are milder than those of inland countries. The warm seawater in winter lowers the temperature of the winds that blow over it toward the land; while in summer, the fresh cool breezes from the water are drawn inland as soon as the heated atmosphere along the coast begins to rise.

The inhabitable portions of the earth derive the water they need from a process of evaporation that is continuous: "It is quite evident that if there were not sufficient water-surface to produce an ample supply of vapor for this purpose, arid districts would occupy more and more of the earth's surface. How much water-surface is necessary for life we do not know; but if the proportions of water and land-surfaces were reversed, it seems probable that the larger proportion of the earth might be uninhabitable." (Wallace, *Man's Place in the Universe*, p. 236.)

The amount of water absorbed by the atmos-

phere will depend on the prevailing temperature. The warmer the air, the greater is its capacity to retain particles of water or vapor. "The space occupied by a cube of air measuring sixty feet each way and having a temperature of sixty-eight degrees Fahrenheit, is able to retain two hundred and fifty-two pounds of water. In temperate climates the annual evaporation is equal to a layer of water thirty-five inches thick." (Child, M.D., *Benedicite*, p. 122.) From this we may gain some notion of the immense quantity of water invisibly suspended throughout the atmosphere of the world.

When hot and dry air is not provided with sufficient moisture by means of evaporation, it saps it from its surroundings. Living creatures will consequently wither away and die. Both man and brute, no less than shrub and tree would soon dry up in a parched atmosphere. Every living creature is dependent on the proper admixture of moisture in the air it breathes. The human body has a water-content of about seventy-five per cent. Certain plants have a still greater water-content. The lungs of animals cannot support life on an air that is too dry. Nor can plants and trees grow in a vaporless atmosphere. The few plants that manage

to eke out a shriveled existence in desert places are almost entirely dependent on the moisture they obtain from the atmosphere. Without this minimum they would wither away entirely.

"We may fancy the atmosphere to be a mighty ship indefatigably carrying on the beneficent commerce of Nature. Setting out from the bleak north, the aerial vessel of the Lord sweeps round the earth to the regions of the south, refreshing them with cool, dry air, and then, having laid in her cargo of heat and moisture, she starts without delay upon her return voyage, dispensing as she goes the blessings of warmth!" (*Child, op. cit.*, p. 113.)

The machinery used in the gigantic task of thus providing the habitable parts of the earth with the necessary amount of water and moderating its temperature is found chiefly in the great atmospheric currents. These, because of their regularity can be foretold in advance. Even typhoons and other violent storms at sea are foretold often with great precision by weather prophets. The sun and the winds co-operate in the distribution of heat and water. "The chief evaporation from the Southern Ocean takes place when the sun is to the south of the Equator, and therefore when winter reigns in the northern hemisphere. At this sea-

son, the cold in high northern latitudes is most intense, and the heavy air has naturally its greatest tendency to pass toward the Equator. The air thus displaced over the Southern Ocean rises, charged with heat and moisture, into the upper regions of the atmosphere, and there forms a current whose general direction is northward, or contrary to the polar current beneath it. By this circulation of currents not only is the equilibrium of the air itself maintained, but a most necessary distribution of water and heat is likewise effected. One part of the globe which has an abundance is made to give to another part the supplies that are naturally wanted." (Child, *op. cit.*, p. 113.)

The equatorial trade winds, coming as they do from the upper regions of the atmosphere that have less rotary velocity to places of greater rotary velocity, fail to reach the earth's surface at right angles with it. Were the earth stationary this would be the case; since it is not, the winds from the north swing to the right, and those from the south to the left; thus the planetary or trade winds are caused, which assist the great work of water-distribution.

## CHAPTER IV

### A FEW FORMS AND CONDITIONS OF WATER

#### *i. The Clouds*

I think a cloud that floats on high  
With vapor from the warm sea fed,  
That makes its way through storm and wind  
And then returns to ocean's bed

Is like to me. My soul came forth  
A breath from God's own tender Breast  
And beaten hard by earth's wild storms  
Returns to Him in death—true rest!  
—Sister M. Agnes, O.S.D.

OUT of the invisible steam caused by evaporation and distributed by the winds and atmospheric currents, visible clouds are made: "When one current of air meets another current colder than itself, they intermingle; and, if the resulting mixture be not of a temperature sufficiently high to retain in a state of invisibility the moisture that is diffused through both, the excess is necessarily condensed into a cloud. The cloud itself is composed of particles of

droplets of water so extremely minute that they float in air. But if the condensation be pushed further, the minute particles coalesce into larger ones, and rain falls to the earth. On the other hand, if warm or dry currents of air happen to set in through the cloud, it will be again more or less completely dissolved, as in the case of vapor puffed out of an engine funnel. Hence the continual changes going on in clouds—their thinning, thickening, enlargement, diminution, and the other alterations of form." (Child, *op. cit.*, p. 102.)

As we observe clouds, at times, taking on various forms and fascinating us by their wondrous powers and charming beauty we instinctively ask, with the poet:

Child of the Sea, the Sun, the Air,  
Floating on high so lightly there,  
Wingless, ethereal, translucent and bright,  
Oh, whither and where art thou bound in thy flight?  
Born of old Ocean, thy father the Sun,  
Upheld by the air till thy mission is done,  
Soon forces unseen will empurple thy sheen  
And cause thee to fall and refresh the dry earth,  
And regain by swift rivers the depths of thy birth.

—W. J. Massingham.

Clouds serve many useful purposes in the economy of nature. They are in reality the

earth's shades, radiators, and aerial reservoirs. By means of clouds Divine Providence regulates the temperature of the sea and the land. The wind drives these containers of heat and cold into the most distant nooks and corners of the globe. At their approach the temperature of the frigid zones is raised, whilst that of the torrid belt of the earth is lowered. Shelley lets a cloud give an account of its nature and services in the following beautiful poem:

I am the daughter of earth and water,  
And the nursling of the sky;  
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;  
I change, but I cannot die;  
For after the rain, when, with never a stain,  
The pavilion of heaven is bare,  
And the winds and sunbeam with their convex gleams  
Build up the blue dome of air,  
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,  
And out of the caverns of rain,  
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,  
I arise and upbuild it again.

Aside from their office of needful servitors to the economy of nature, clouds have a distinct aesthetic value. They direct our minds to a realm of creation "in which nature has done more for the sake of pleasing man, more for the sole and evident purpose of talking to him, and teaching him, than in any other of her works,

and it is just the part in which we least attend to her. . . . Every essential purpose of the sky might, so far as we know, be answered, if once in three days, or thereabouts, a great, ugly, black rain-cloud were brought up over the blue, and everything well watered, and so all left blue again till the next time, with perhaps a film of morning and evening mist or dew. And instead of this, there is not a moment of any day in our lives, when nature is not producing scene after scene, picture after picture, glory after glory, and working still upon such exquisite and constant principles of the most perfect beauty that it is quite certain it is all done for us, and intended for our perpetual pleasure. And every man, wherever placed, however far from other sources of interest or beauty, has this doing for him constantly. The sky is for all.”  
(Ruskin, *Modern Painters*.)

It would be difficult to improve on the same writer's vivid description of the formation of clouds: “That mist which lies in the morning so softly in the valley, level and white, through which the tops of the trees rise as if through an inundation—why is it so heavy? And why does it lie so low, being yet so thin and frail that it will melt away utterly into splendor of morning, when the sun has shone on it but a few mo-

ments more? Those colossal pyramids, huge and firm with outlines as of rocks, and strength to bear the beating of the high sun on their fiery flanks,—why are they so light, their bases high over our heads, high over the heads of Alps? Why will these melt away, not as the sun rises, but as he descends, and leave the stars of twilight clear, while the valley vapor gains upon the earth like a shroud?

“Or those war-clouds that gather on the horizon, dragon-crested, tongued with fire;—how is their barbed strength bridled? What bits are these they are champing with their vaporous lips, flinging off flakes of black foam? Leagued leviathans of the Sea of Heaven, out of their nostrils goeth smoke, and their eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. The sword of him that layeth at them cannot hold the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon. Where ride the captains of their armies? Where are set the measures of their march? Fierce murmurers, answering each other from morning until evening,—what rebuke is this which has awed them into peace? What hand has reined them back by the way by which they came?

“And tell me, how is a cloud outlined? Granted whatever you choose to ask, concerning its material, or its aspect, its loftiness and

luminousness,—what about its limitation? What hews it into a heap, or spins it into a web? Cold is usually shapeless, I suppose, extending over large spaces equally, or with gradual diminution. You cannot have, in the open air, angles and wedges and coils and cliffs of cold. Yet the vapor stops suddenly, sharp and steep as a rock, or thrusts itself across the gates of heaven in likeness of a brazen bar; or braids itself in and out, and across and across, like a tissue of tapestry; or falls into ripples, like sand; or into waving shreds and tongues, as fire. On what anvils and wheels is the vapor pointed, twisted, hammered, whirled, as the potter's clay? By what hands is the incense of the sea built up into domes of marble?" (Ruskin, *Modern Painters*.)

Clouds form the exquisite, ever-changing tapestry of our palace wonderful. They have a peculiar charm about them at all times, but especially at dawn and sunset. It is hard to conceive anything more sublime in nature than the scene that unfolds itself before the wondering gaze at early dawn. From our vantage ground on a mountain-peak we see the rising sun roll into view and engage at once in a gigantic struggle for supremacy with the vast array of clouds above, below and round about. We now

behold in wonderment that brilliant orb of day advancing swiftly in his golden chariot. Countless shafts of light are hurled in every direction. As he approaches the immense army of clouds before us he appears to reel, and then sinks out of sight, submerged in the ocean of vapor enveloping everything far and wide. But anon, like a warrior who has by strategy and a supreme effort regained lost ground, he slowly emerges, comes into full view and then majestically ascends his throne—a conqueror. The tumultuous array of clouds are now at the foot of the throne. They there subside, brighten up, take their defeat with a smile as one by one they do homage to their lord and master—the Orb of Day—and disappear from the scene.

## *2. The Rain*

In a certain sense clouds are the ships of the Lord. They sail about in the vast blue sea of heaven's dome, gathering the pearly drops which they will rain down in due season upon the land and sea. In truth, a gentle, fructifying shower is valued more highly at times than all the precious gems of the world. On their perennial voyage of beneficence the clouds of spring and summer seem to sing:

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers  
From the seas and the streams;  
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid  
In their noonday dreams.  
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken  
The sweet buds every one,  
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast  
As she dances about the sun.

—Shelley.

The Babylonian youths, when recounting and praising the gifts of the Lord, reëchoed the anthem of the rain-clouds and cried out in the joy of their hearts: "O, ye showers, and dew, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him forever." And indeed, no man who is able to think rightly can refrain from thanking God for the munificent gift of water in the forms of rain and dew.

What dread suffering would follow in the wake of a universal drought lasting but one year! We shrink from the very supposition of such a calamity. Water, especially in the form of the fructifying shower, brings untold natural blessings. The "annual rainfall of the earth is computed to have a bulk of 186,240 cubic imperial miles. If spread equally over the land of the globe—fifty million square miles—this rain would cover it with water to a depth of three feet." (Child, *Benedicite*, p. 122.)

Since the Heavenly Father makes use of secondary causes in the government of the world, to pray for rain during a drought is a practical form of social service. It is certain that many a temporal favor is withheld from us because we do not fulfill the divine precept, "ask and you shall receive." May we not suppose that the necessary amount of rain may, at times, depend on the humble and prayerful petition of an individual or a community? Elias asked the Lord of heaven and earth to send rain, and his prayer was heard. So was that of many other holy men and women who asked the same favor.

We read that "in the Valle Giudicarie of the Trentino a whole night a few years ago was devoted to prayer for rain. After a religious function in the Church of S. Croce, the bells of all the churches of the countryside rang out as the sign for the departure of the religious processions from the various villages, headed by their priests, the civil authorities, the confraternities with their ancient standards, followed by a long line of the faithful. Mass was celebrated and Holy Communion distributed. At 2:30 A. M., in the darkness of the night, illuminated by the light of torches and candles, the multitude moved off in an interminable procession, singing hymns and reciting prayers as

they went along the rough, steep ascent of Monte Grande. At the summit, priests and people knelt for two hours in prayer. By evening the rain descended in abundance to refresh the parched land. The faith and prayer of the people had been rewarded." (*The Fortnightly Review*, St. Louis, Mo., Oct. 1, 1928.)

The benefits of a fructifying shower are indeed so numerous and far-reaching at times, that they may be classed with the greatest of temporal blessings: "Besides bestowing fertility on the soil, rain cleanses and purifies both the land and the atmosphere. From the latter it often safely conducts the electricity which is accumulating unduly, and, by thus restoring the equilibrium between the air and the earth, renders the thunder-storm unnecessary. Rain also relieves the air of some of its superfluous carbonic acid, which it hands down to the rootlets of the plants; and, by means of its admixture with this acid, the surface water is enabled to take up a certain quantity of lime, which it transports down rill and river into the sea to furnish myriads of creatures with materials out of which to build their shells. Rain sweeps down into the plains the weather-worn particles of rock which are to form new soil; and while it washes the surface of mountain and valley,

street and house, it increases the general salubrity by clearing off the minute rubbish of the world." (Child, *op. cit.*, p. 122.) These are a few of the many divine favors that come to us through the medium of the pearly drops that fructify the earth.

### 3. *The Dew*

The dew is another source of heavenly blessings. Scripture seems to abound in allusions to dew, which, like rain, is associated with what is good and beneficent. The "dews of Hermon" blest the land where they fell. A formal patriarchal blessing asked that "God might give of the dews of heaven." The contemplation of dew, moreover, is not without spiritual value:

Pretty little crystal dewdrop  
Sparkling on the flowers  
How you brighten fragrant petals  
In the morning hours.

Loud you tell the friend of Nature  
That God doth remember  
All His creatures from life's springtide  
Till its bleak December.

—S.M.T., O.S.B.

How beautiful Nature appears when adorned with her diamonds of dew! "Well may

they challenge not a lenient but a rigorous comparison with their rivals. How incomparably finer too, the setting! The rare and costly mineral is mostly to be seen in the stuffy atmosphere of crowded rooms, and like an artificial beauty, requires the skillful hand for its display. Its brightness pales before the light of day, and needs the garish lamp to stimulate its sparkling. But the diamonds of the garden or the meadow are perfect from Nature's hand. They are set with boundless profusion on a ground of choicest green, and no art can improve their new-born loveliness. They are to be seen only in the fresh air of the morn, and the light that suits them best is the pure light of heaven.”  
(Child, *op. cit.*, p. 120.)

The tiny dewdrop, unlike the gem worn by man, reflects not a few rays of sunlight only, but the whole orb of day. It must not surprise us to find that divine grace, because of its beautifying and refreshing qualities, is often compared with dew. How charming to behold at early dawn a huge diamond of dew in the calyx of a full-blown lily aglow with sunlight! When life eternal dawns upon us, may our souls be all radiant with light from the Sun of Justice!

Upon our fainting souls distil  
The grace of thy celestial dew;

Let no fresh snare to sin beguile,  
No former sin revive anew.

—Hymn for Sunday Vespers.

#### *4. The Hoar Frost*

How exquisite the transformation of nature wrought by hoar frost! The scene presented by its tiny, faery crystals as they sparkle in their lustrous sheen from grass, shrub and tree, beggars description, and whilst the little wonder-workers are spreading their blanket of glistening gems, we seem to hear them sing:

Oh, sleep, little pines, in your serried lines,  
Through the sheen of the stilly night,  
Oh, dream and sigh, you great pines high,  
I bring you a blanket white.

In glittering wreaths I twine your leaves,  
With faery tinsel spread  
And soft and light a coverlet white  
I drop on your drowsy head.

I frost your cones till they hang on high  
Like diamond apples against the sky.

Oh, firtree tall by the mountain wall,  
I bring you a diadem.

The beech's grace I hang with lace,  
And the cedar from crown to hem.

In a bright cascade are my splendors laid  
To cover the old dead weeds,  
That bare and brown were laden down

With a burden of rattling seeds.  
I clothe the valley in vesture white,  
And weave the woof in a windless night.  
—Morris.

And who does not look again and still again at the frozen vapor in its enchanting designs on window-pane or skylight! Here wizard Frost appears to be at his best. "The faculty of seeing pictures on the frost-covered window-pane is related to that which sees pictures in the fire. There are people who can sit before a fireplace where the blazing logs are burning down to embers, and see nothing save the prosaic. The same people notice a frosted window-pane with only a sense of irritation because it intercepts their view. There are other eyes which find pictures on the panes—mountain peaks rising skyward, cataracts in their wild plunge over dizzy heights, tall pines tapering to a point, graceful ferns similar in their silvery likeness to those we gathered last summer in shady nooks, and, gazing in admiration, the beholder fears the approach of noonday that will efface this gorgeous beauty." (*Schoolmate.*)

The poet does well in directing our attention to the images that come into view at sight of so common a thing as a frost-covered window-pane:

Out of the vast of starry night  
The frost came wonderful and white;  
Upon the hill it paused to rest,  
And left it all in ermine drest.

It gently tapped upon the door,  
And shyly entered on the floor;  
And on the window-pane it then  
Traced wondrous things with magic pen.

What birds and beasts and widespread trees,  
What clouds and butterflies and bees,  
What cities and what castle walls,  
What lakes and streams and waterfalls!

Out of the wintry atmosphere,  
Bearing a beauty fine and clear,  
The white frost came with breath of light  
And clothed the world with glory bright.  
—Mason.

### *5. The Snow*

The hidden marvels of the snow,  
Which now our strongest lenses show,  
Were relished with the Maker's zest,  
In aeons of Thine active rest  
Before poor groping, blundering fools  
Ascribed them to blind Nature's tools.

—L. Drummond, S. J.

Who is not filled with a soothing sense of the  
sublime and beautiful on beholding the magic

change in nature produced by frozen vapor as it gently falls in the form of snow! How beautifully the glistening crystals clothe the plains, hills and mountains with their immaculate garb of downy fleece. Were the water suspended in the clouds to congeal suddenly, as it sometimes does, it would pelt the earth with lumps of ice or hailstones.

The heart of everyone is rejoiced on beholding the bright, graceful, little blue-white crystals that form when the vapor freezes before it becomes rain or hail. The snowflakes somehow fall into those places which seem to have been destined for them. They are, indeed, as

Milk-white down from the swans of the Lord,  
Fleece from the lambs of God,  
Flung to the wings by cherubs gay—  
A quilt for the sleeping sod!

—Father Eustace, O.F.M.

And to think that no two of all those peerless gems are exactly alike! Nowhere in this vast world of ours does nature manifest greater artistic skill: "The fleeting, fairylike beauties of the snowflake which we thoughtlessly crush under foot, are so varied and delicate that no artist could ever contrive such exquisite formations. In many cases, they are far more charming and intricate than any designs of

the jeweler's art. In fact, our eyesight is not keen enough to detect their wondrous variations without the aid of a camera."

Few men are better qualified to describe the entrancing beauty of snow crystals than Wilson Alwyn Bentley, who writes: "The reader can imagine, once a perfect crystal is found, the intense anxiety of the photographer to get a picture of it before evaporation sets in. When a snow crystal evaporates, it is gone forever. Another just like it will never be found, for no two of the tabular forms are ever exactly alike. This infinite diversity gives intense fascination to the work, for each one looked at is almost sure to picture new features or a new combination of old features, and one is always justified in the expectation of finding specimens incomparably more beautiful than any hitherto found. There are usually one or two times during a given winter when the flakes are unusually choice. At such times one is torn with mixed emotions of delight and despair. He is thrilled and amazed at the marvelous beauty of the flakes, and in despair that so few of the countless snow gems,—masterpieces of Nature's art,—can be preserved by a photograph. The desire comes for a thousand hands, a thousand cameras, to preserve more of this exqui-

site beauty so lavishly scattered over the earth.

"When perfect snowflakes are falling, and one glances over the fields and realizes the countless millions that are falling on even one acre, he thinks of infinity. How small, after all, the triumph of photographing a mere handful of the snow gems! My thirty-eight hundred and fifty snowflakes would hardly make a good snowball such as the children throw at one another. What impresses us is not our part in photographing a few of them, but the marvel wrought in the making of them. Atoms and molecules, countless trillions of them in a drop of water, particles of matter so small as to be utterly beyond the power of microscopes to reveal, are the makers. Physicists picture atoms as tiny solar systems, a larger positive electron forming the nucleus (or sun) and smaller negative electrons (planets) revolving about it.

"And these beautiful snow crystals are constructed of such as these! Endowed with attractive and repellent properties, these wonderful atoms exert such an influence, push and pull, upon one another, in response to some mysterious overlordship group-control exerted by what we call . . . crystallic laws, that they force one another to assume certain alignments, thus forming crystals. . . . It is indeed

an impressive lesson that Nature works her marvels through and by the unseen. Atoms, gravity, electricity, heat waves, etc.,—who sees them? And yet they are the most important things in Nature.—These thoughts have led us far afield and yet the structure, the life-history of the snowflakes is linked up with worlds, and suns, and everything in Nature.” (In *The Guide to Nature*, February, 1922.)

In the light of these awe-inspiring facts and truths, we can understand how even the untutored mind of a little invalid finds joy and consolation at sight of the falling snow:

Tell me, said I to a snowflake,  
Where your home may be?  
Tell me why you come so softly  
Down to visit me?

Maybe you're a little angel  
Watching over me;  
Telling me when pains are sharpest,  
“Bear them patiently.”

Do not leave me; and this evening  
When my prayers are made,  
I will call the nurse and tell her  
Not to draw the shade.

—Vincent Blake.

*6. Ice and Icebergs*

Ice is another form and state of water that awakens gratitude. In congealing and becoming ice, water has a law all its own ; it contracts regularly, and its molecules sink until its temperature approximates the freezing-point, and then the frozen particles begin to expand and rise. What a benign ordinance !

If the general law governing bodies that congeal would likewise control freezing water, what would happen ? Why, as the water grew cold and formed ice, this would become proportionately heavier than the water and sink to the bottom. Additional ice would then form and the water would freeze from the bottom instead of on the surface. Consequently, the rivers and lakes and seas that now freeze over in winter and thaw in spring, would in the course of time be frozen solid, and nothing could live in them. Out of loving solicitude for us, His children, the infinitely wise and good Author of nature has therefore made a special law for freezing water. Like the wide, deep ocean that pulsates into every bay and river, so God's loving heart compasses the uttermost confines of the earth, manifesting everywhere a paternal care of us by means of physical laws.

What a wise Providence, too, is observed in the storing up and distribution of the ice and snow of the far north and south! "A hundred years and more are required for an iceberg to come into existence. Down on the frozen plains and rough rocks of the icebound countries falls the snow, day by day, hour by hour, piling up gradually into little heaps and hillocks, then into larger mounds, and finally into hills and small mountains. Fresh falls of snow cover these again, freezing where they lie, till finally an immense crest of ice towers over the whole and eventually slips into the waters below that lie all about. Down, down, the masses go, all the time, never stopping, till the bottom of our iceberg is often as much as 700 feet below the level of the sea. After settling down as far as they can, the icebergs, lifting themselves a hundred or more feet above the surface, suddenly break away from the vast sea of ice and move to warmer quarters. Off they go, moving slowly and majestically across the seas towards the temperate zones, visions of beauty, many of them wonders of the great Creating Hand."

These hills and mountains of ice moving along in the ocean till they gradually disappear in vapor and water are of very great im-

portance in the economy of nature. They have a well-defined work to do and they do it well. If they served no other purpose than that of bringing the cold of the far north toward the temperate and torrid zones, this alone would make them invaluable to the peoples inhabiting the countries along which they travel. Nature is, indeed, the greatest and most dependable producer and purveyor of ice.

What wisdom and goodness are here evidenced! "To any one contemplating the great arctic glaciers it must be curious to think that much of the water there piled up in ice has been sucked up amid the warmth and sunshine of the distant Southern Ocean. The quantity of water thus carried and of heat thus diffused by the agency of the atmosphere almost exceeds belief, and ranks the operation among the greatest of those physical contrivances by which the welfare of the world is maintained. Wonderful Power of the air,—working day and night, noiselessly, invisibly, mighty link in the water-circulation of the globe,—'dropping fatness' over the earth, and with unerring instinct giving to it from year to year the exact supply that is needful." (Child, M.D., *Benedicite*, p. 114.) The constant accumulation,

therefore, of ice and snow in the frigid zones had a definite purpose from the very beginning.

The vast snow fields in polar regions and great altitudes form also perennial storehouses of immense quantities of debris. Eventually the entire mass is carried to other lands. As these glaciers move along they crush the rocks beneath their great weight into gravel and sand. Often, they grind out deep valleys, or form lake basins and river courses. Thus, too, they prepare the surface of the earth for agriculture.

Where the supply of natural ice for domestic use does not suffice, man resorts to artificial means of providing it. Manufactured ice is being produced in ever-increasing quantity. One way of making ice is this: Large cans of distilled water are placed in a tank filled with brine, through which ammonia flows in coils. As the liquid ammonia evaporates and turns into gas, it absorbs heat and thus lowers the temperature of the brine to a point below freezing; the water in the cans likewise drops in temperature, and soon begins to freeze; the ice thickens and ere long forms a solid block in the centre of the can.

Within the past few years great progress has

been made in refrigeration, especially for domestic needs. The storage ice-plants which may still be seen in large number, in all probability, will in time disappear and be supplanted in the home by the frigidaire.

There is also a newly-invented "dry ice" which is called thus because of its dry evaporation. In appearance it resembles cotton, and may be packed in cartons. Its temperature is much lower than that of natural ice. A little of it, if allowed to evaporate on the skin, will absorb a sufficient quantity of animal heat to cause a blister. We can imagine what a boon modern inventions for producing and shipping artificial ice will eventually become to people inhabiting the torrid zone. Who could number even now the lives saved by the beneficent aid of ice! To those in good health, no less than to the sick and convalescent, ice has become well-nigh indispensable. Well may we, then, join the three Babylonian youths and exclaim, with grateful heart, "O ye ice and snow, bless ye the Lord; praise, and magnify Him forever!"

## CHAPTER V

### DRINKING WATER

EVERY human being is vitally interested in good drinking water. Man's health is greatly conditioned on the purity and quantity of his available drinking water. When the Lord blesses us with a sufficient supply of wholesome water, our spirit should instinctively turn heavenward, as does the head of the little bird after taking a sip of water. To have a plentiful source of good drinking water is one of the greatest natural blessings.

Water keeps the blood from becoming too thick; it is an important element in the digestive fluids, and helps wonderfully in carrying the waste out of the body through the skin, lungs and kidneys. Since the skin is one of the principal ways by which waste-matter is expelled from the body, its pores must be kept open by washing and bathing.

When the rain-water or melted snow that trickles into the earth and collects in sufficient quantity meets with an impenetrable sub-

stance, it is forced to the surface, and we have a spring or artesian well. What a pleasure, on a hot summer day, to enjoy Nature's hospitality at one of her pure, unadulterated fountains! "In no fairer shape does Nature spread out her water-treasures before us. How refreshing the draught thus obtained at first hand! How cool in summer, and temperate in winter! For it comes from those deep regions of the earth which are equally shielded from sun and frost. What a difference there is between the tame water of the 'main' and the living crystal of the 'source.' Such a spring is worthy of a pilgrimage, and adds a fresh pleasure to the summer-day's ramble. It is like repairing to a garden to eat fruit newly plucked by one's own hand."

(Child, *op cit.*, p. 129.)

We all dwell with supreme delight on the favorite spring or well of our childhood rambles. It, no doubt, still flows on and generously dispenses its limpid largess. As then, so now

Many seek its grassy brink,  
Loiter there and stoop to drink;  
Leans thereto the lowing herd  
And the little singing bird;  
Comes the harvester of grain,  
Comes the farmer with his wain,  
Kneel beside, and through the heat  
Take the road with lighter feet;

Burly drivers of the plow  
Cool their burning lips and brow;  
Shepherd brown and dusty tramp,  
In the shadows dim and damp  
Of the overarching boughs,  
Pause to wipe their dripping brows;  
Sultry wayfarers from town  
By its margin fling them down,  
Slake their thirst and, going thence,  
Bless the fountain's effluence.

—P. J. Coleman.

Thanks to Wordsworth for immortalizing that deep exhaustless fountain of “the best water he ever drank”:

The moss-covered bucket I hail as a treasure;  
For often at noon, when returned from the field,  
I found it the source of an exquisite pleasure,  
The purest and sweetest that nature can yield.  
How ardent I seized it, with hands that were glowing,  
And quick to the white-pebbled bottom it fell;  
Then soon with the emblem of truth overflowing,  
And dripping with coolness it rose from the well—  
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,  
The moss-covered bucket arose from the well.

How sweet from the green mossy brim to receive it,  
As poised on the curb, it inclined to my lips!  
Not a full blushing goblet could tempt me to leave it,  
Though filled with the nectar that Jupiter sips.  
And now, far removed from the loved situation,  
The tear of regret will oftentimes swell,

As fancy returns to my father's plantation,  
And sighs for the bucket which hangs in the well—  
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,  
The moss-covered bucket which hangs in the well.

—Wordsworth.

And whose heart does not expand with gratitude when he thinks of the many blessings dispensed by the health-giving mineral waters to be had at first hand in almost every part of the globe: "Providence, ever bountiful as kind, has scattered mineral springs profusely over most parts of the world, and thousands upon thousands annually owe to them the blessings of restored health. They are gifts from a source that lies beyond our ken, and modern science with all its progress cannot supersede them. We know the constituents of the most famous springs; they have been analyzed and imitated most perfectly; but there is a point of difference between the real and the artificial which no art can seize. Nature is a cunning worker, and in her laboratory she compounds the 'mineral water' under conditions of which we are ignorant, but from which, nevertheless, are derived special virtues which similar ingredients mixed artificially never acquire." (Child, *op. cit.*, p. 131.)

When a dearth of well or spring water ex-

ists, as in countries of the torrid zone, God in His loving kindness provides indigenous plants that yield this beverage. The suaharo cactus that grows in the Arizona Desert is a plant of this kind. It has a rich water content: "The suaharo and the pitahaya cacti are reservoirs of water, cool, fresh, and plentiful," writes Dean Harris, who observed them in the great desert of Lower California. In his *Travel-Talks* he tells how the Digger Indians tap them when they need water. "By plunging a knife into the heart of the cactus, he says, the water begins to ooze out slowly and unsatisfactorily, but still enough comes to save a man's life. The native, familiar with the moods of the desert, never travels without a can, matches, and a hatchet. When he runs short of water, he makes for the nearest bunch of columnar cacti, as the pitahaya and suaharo are commonly called. He selects his tree and cuts it down, having made two fires eight or ten feet apart. Then he makes a large incision in the middle of the tree, cuts off the butt and the end, and places the log between the fires, ends to fires. The heat of the fire drives the water in the log to its center, whence it begins to flow from the cut already made into the can. It is by this method the Indians and other expert

desert travelers renew their supply of water.”  
(*Mt. Angel Magazine.*)

Truly, God has blest the earth and bounteously watered it. Water is indeed a beneficent boon in every form and condition of its existence. “It is a blessing in the ocean, where it diffuses life and the means of living to myriads of creatures that could not exist without it; it is a blessing as vapor, cooling and refreshing the air at one time, warming and moderating the rigors of climate at another; as cloud, shielding the earth from the sun by checking excessive radiation, and tempering electric influences; as rain, clearing the air from impurities and reviving the thirsty soil; as surface moisture, bringing nourishment to plants and animals; as streamlets, irrigating and fertilizing the land.” (Child, *op. cit.*, p. 157.)

## CHAPTER VI

### FLOWING WATER

#### *I. The Brook*

How interesting to follow a particle of water on its perennial journeyings! Scientists tell us that there is no loss of either matter or energy in the universe. Yet, how intricate and constant the cycle of changes and interchanges of the substances that make up the material universe! In particular, how mysterious the chemical and physical laws and forces that control, transform, and distribute the earth's water supply! Tiny particles of this beneficent gift of God are attracted by the sun and held for a time in suspense by the circumambient air. They then condense, form clouds, and descend, at Nature's bidding, in the form of snow, hail or rain.

Again, consider the waters on the earth : The heaving, restless ocean with its thousand tributaries appears to be to the earth that which the heart with its arterial system is to a living

organism. The earth's veins and arteries, destined to carry and distribute its waters where they are needed, are the brooks, creeks, and rivers. All the various forms of physical life are dependent on water, just as the animal organism is dependent on blood.

Waters that have a continuous current are consequently called *living* waters; bodies of stagnant water, on the other hand, are called *dead*. The "Dead Sea" bears this name because its waters are stagnant.

Water-streams in rapid motion are among the most charming gifts of nature. Still many a threshold brook with its luring, sparkling loveliness, is allowed to speed by unheeded. How varied the pleasures that are afforded to the lover of nature by

A braw little brook from the nearby woods  
Meandering on in its many moods,  
Jeweled with iris and fringed with ferns,  
New beauties revealing at all its turns,  
Whilst through the wilds its course doth take,  
Till it loses itself in the distant lake!

—Emma Peirce.

Of all "living waters" the mountain brook seems to be the most wayward and capricious. It reminds one of a liberated captive who has just gained his freedom, and, scarcely knowing

as yet how to use it, indulges in all kinds of pranks. At times, it is merry and elusive. Again, it dances from pool to pool, leaps over precipices, rushes through gorges, and darts over mossy rocks that fairly glow in their emerald garb! The delicate ferns and wild flowers enjoy its nearness, but loathe to observe that it is impatient of their company. Most of all do the choristers of heaven seek it out; and scarce have they found such a merry brook, when they attune their voices to its never-ceasing song as it dashes and splashes along on its wild and giddy race to the sea. And all the while, the sun and clouds, and the moon and stars are furtively reflected by it in varied designs and colors, which in turn seem to set its ripples and bubbles aflame.

Among the ferns and waving grass,  
There winds a silvery thread,  
And here and there it sparkles bright,  
Where moving mosses spread;  
Still farther on, it broadens out  
Into a laughing brook,  
And makes the valley smile for joy  
In every shady nook.

The agile deer comes to its brink  
And enters, unafraid;  
Sweet columbine blooms on its banks,

Beneath the tall trees' shade;  
And myriads of water-fowl  
Seek out its burnished gleam,  
It shares its joys with all who will,  
This laughing little stream.

—H. H. Fariss.

Then there is the summer brook which, dominated by the spirit of the season, flows on demurely and peaceably, apparently content to be left to its dreams, its lights, and its shadows. It seems to move cautiously, hardly knowing whether to go or stay. Because of its inertness it teems with life beneath its apparently placid surface. We gaze in admiration upon the rich and graceful swaying of its tender plant life and those bright gleams of light that play hide and seek with its myriads of microscopic inhabitants.

One can often derive great pleasure from a brook by sitting down on its grassy bank and simply looking at it. Or again who could ever grow tired of following a virgin streamlet of liquid silver on its peaceful journey through a cool forest—

Where it speeds on with many a turn  
And crystal-clear curvette,  
By mossy bank most sweetly sown  
With starry flowers inset;

And willows bending lowly down  
Their slender twigs to wet.

—Wordsworth.

## 2. *The Creek*

There are creeks that, owing to their peculiar courses or settings, beggar description. Father Charles Dawson, S.J., describing the Wauna creek which flows into the Aruka, a river of British Guiana, writes: "I can hardly imagine anything in Nature more beautiful than are these South American creeks. One seems to be paddling through a submerged but luxuriant forest, a perfect labyrinth of loveliness. Banks there are none appearing, for the trees grow right into the water, and their branches, meeting overhead, make delightful arcades. This particular creek has a sandy bottom, and in consequence there are no mangroves, which are mud-lovers; but their place is well supplied with what are called 'cork-trees,' with fantastic roots like boards writhed into strange shapes and patterns. Wild cocoa-trees (not the cocoa-nut palm) hang down their great velvety pods like ornaments; there are also giant palms and great tree-ferns. Here and there are trees that have fallen across the stream, but these in their decay have been

seized upon by flowering grasses, lichens, and other delightful forms of vegetative life, and converted into triumphal arches. In some places rotting stumps of trees, under Nature's gracious touch, have become charming bird-shelters; and again, branches swinging across have been decorated by fairy hands with different kinds of gleaming orchids. Festoons of creepers hang down from above. The water, deep and black, like a polished mirror reflects most perfectly this phantasy of foliage. Here are the enchanting naves and aisles of Nature's temples, whose silent solemnity fills one's inmost soul with the sense and awe of worship. At every turn new glories appear as if Nature had infinite resources at her command."

(*Catholic Missions*, Vol. III, no. 26.)

We need not, however, travel to far distant lands to obtain cheerful thoughts and enjoy delightful scenes of creeks and small rivers. I dare say every nature-lover can recall familiar scenes that have influenced him in a manner similar to that described in the following stanzas:

Today from a car window-pane  
I glimpsed a tinkling, dancing brook;  
Cool, drifting willows swayed aside  
To let me snatch a look.

One fleeting look! No tarrying,  
That trolley bounding citywards,  
Quite bent to bear me to my toil,  
Afar from brooks and swards.

No tarrying a stone to toss,  
Or plunge my feet in crystal spray;  
Exchanged youth's hour of loitering,  
For burdens of the day.

A patch of green and silver framed,  
One moment in a window glass!  
Yet all my toiling hours through,  
I heard that brooklet pass.

—Catherine M. Hayes.

I may be permitted to mention here an obscure little stream, Sandusky River, in Ohio, U.S.A. This river has become very dear to the author because of the many and diverse sports and pleasures it afforded him and his friends in youth and early manhood:

Ah, restful, winding, crystal stream  
Where fancy loves to roam and dream,  
And joys untold do swift unfold,  
Which thou, Sandusky, sole dost hold.

'Mid hills of picturesque outlines  
Adorned with flowers, trees, and vines,  
Alive with tunes of birds and bells,  
Of wind and wave 'gainst rocks and dells.

Thy setting, fair beyond compare  
In Autumn-garb of colors rare;  
Enchanting, thy fine lacery  
In Winter's moon-lit jewelry.

What wonder! Sweet must be thy course  
Since Honey Creek's thy constant source.  
Revere those hills and shady rills,  
For, cures they bring to human ills.

True emblem of a Christian life:  
Here, far remote from dust and strife,  
Thou flowest on 'mid festooned trees,  
Exhaling cheer on every breeze.

Thus, drawing blessings from above  
Through prayer of faith, and hope, and love,  
They who on the "Living Water" live,  
Supernal cheer to others give.

### *3. Cataracts and Waterfalls*

The medley notes of rapids, or the tumultuous roar of waterfalls, have for many a well-nigh irresistible lure. Niagara Falls, which is one of the greatest cataracts in the world, attracts tourists and nature-lovers by the thousands annually. Let us hearken to the wild riot of sounds and motions made by "The Cataract of Lodore" as described by Southey:

The cataract strong  
Then plunges along,

## FOUNTAINS OF JOY

Striking and raging  
As if a war waging.  
Rising and leaping,  
Sinking and creeping  
Swelling and sweeping,  
Showering and springing,  
Flying and flinging,  
Writhing and ringing,  
Eddying and whisking,  
Spouting and frisking,  
Turning and twisting,  
Around and around  
With endless rebound ;  
Smiting and fighting,  
A sight to delight in ;  
Confounding, astounding,  
And deafening the ear with its sound.

Collecting, projecting,  
Receding and speeding,  
And shocking and rocking,  
And darting and parting,  
And threading and spreading,  
And whizzing and hissing,  
And dripping and skipping,  
And hitting and splitting,  
And shining and twining,  
And rattling and battling,  
And shaking and quaking,  
And pouring and roaring,  
And waving and raving,  
And tossing and crossing,  
And gurgling and struggling,

And heaving and cleaving,  
And moaning and groaning,  
And glittering and frittering,  
And gathering and feathering,  
And whitening and brightening,  
And quivering and shivering,  
And hurrying and skurrying,  
And thundering and floundering;

Dividing and gliding and sliding,  
And falling and brawling and sprawling,  
And driving and riving and striving,  
And sprinkling and twinkling and wrinkling;  
And thumping and plumping and bumping and jumping,  
And dashing and flashing and splashing and clashing,  
And so never ending, but always descending,  
Sounds and motions forever and ever are blending,  
All at once and all o'er, with a mighty uproar,  
And this way the water comes down at Lodore.

—Abridged from Southey.

More soothing and, perhaps, more fascinating is the modest little waterfall that seems to address its song to God alone:

I heard a waterfall today  
Sing a song of silver spray  
In the forest far away,  
Where graceful ferns grow tall and green,  
And pointed pine trees rise and lean  
Above the rocks of a ravine.

No sweeter song could ever be,  
And all the mystic melody  
Was sung to God—and not to me.  
I heard a waterfall today  
Sing a song of silver spray  
In the forest far away.

—Ella Frances Gilbert.

#### *4. The River*

A thousand changes come and go  
Upon the winding river,  
As gleaming darts of light are winged  
From daydawn's golden quiver.

And in the silence of the night,  
When stars are o'er it gleaming,  
The ripples break in smiles of light,  
As if of star-rays dreaming.

But day and night, the quiet deeps,  
Of dawns and stars unknowing,  
Obedient to changeless laws,  
On to the sea are flowing.

—Anonymous.

Let us now leisurely stroll along the velvety banks of some well-known stream that will soon lead us through village, hamlet and populous city to the far-distant seas. "In a few days this pure, crystal liquid, with which one fills the hollow of his hand and drinks with supreme delight, will reach the vast ocean and

be mixed with its briny salt-water. On its way it becomes swollen by diminutive and oft invisible streams. Only a few miles from its source, at the junction of three valleys, each of which brings its liquid tribute, the humble stream becomes a small river. Geography has already imposed upon it a distinctive name—the illustrious name under which it will carry to the sea the imposing ocean steamers, and combat the restraining efforts of the harbor-bar. It is as yet but a young river that the old stone bridges bestride with a single span, and that still retains its rural grace. It flows slowly under the elms and aspen trees, with their interlaced branches: in springtime there is an endless concert in the thickets on either shore, while the transparent winged insects, grouped on the reeds, seem like the notes of the music sung by the winged virtuosi. The youthful stream, hardly navigable as yet for the small craft, is very lonely. Only from time to time, at most, does one discover in a small ferry-boat moored to a stump, a light coat, the point of a gray beard under a straw hat, a long fishing rod, and, at the extremity, the float,—the only red spot in all that verdure,—riding quietly among the leaves of the water-lilies.

“The young river rapidly becomes adult,

and its mass of water, always more abundant, begins its work of utility. When it passes near a village it hears the chatter and laughter of the bare-armed washerwomen, and the rhythmic sound of their beetles; and it carries away the variegated soap-bubbles. Its first deeds of usefulness have an innocent and pastoral character. It is with a sort of complacence that it enters the millrace, turns the paddles of the heavy wheel with ease, and then rushes onward in joyous spurts and cascades.

"Suddenly, at the turn of a hillock, it receives its first tributary stream; and, being now doubled in width and depth, it really deserves the name of river. It goes its way, calm and laboriously, for, henceforth it will carry boats. On its steep banks, under the trembling poplars, the horses with all their strength tow the empty barges up the river; and on the small transports with their brilliant colors, coming down stream, the sailors sing. On it goes, meandering gracefully, at times enclosed between vine-spread hills, at times delaying and dallying amongst the meadows. Villages multiply along its fertile shores; and the peaceful steeples, like good old folk, watch it as it passes by. Still on it goes, absorbing now one river, now another. Farther on, there where a sluice-

keeper stands out against the sky, a canal enriches it with its captive torrent.

"It flows on, a noble river. It passes through populous cities. Encumbered with pontoons and all sorts of small vessels, it flows more impetuously among historic stones hurling itself in anger under the enormous arches of monumental bridges. Over the crowded and noisy quays the open spires of ancient churches cast on its waters their trembling shadows. Then it launches out again into the open country, presenting its mirror to all the enchantments of the heavens. It scintillates under the burning light of summer; dawn covers it with roses; the setting sun riddles it with topazes and carbuncles; and through the blue nights it seems to follow an enchanted dream in the melancholy moonlight.

"At last the river reaches its goal. It has come to the estuary. It is so vast that off there at the distant anchorage, near the vague and remote shore, the great ships that have gone around the world,—those that have ploughed the indigo seas under flaming skies, and those that with their strong prows have crushed immense icebergs in the midst of terrifying darkness—the slender three-masters, and the powerful steamers—all seem but fragile shells

rigged with cobwebs. The last beacon is now passed, and on the hazy coast the white towers of the lighthouses are so small as to be almost invisible. The enormous liquid mass that the tide attracts and repels by turns, irritated by the struggle, now bristles with small waves, and now rushes forward with the sweep of rapids. From the open main, whence the wind brings a confused clamor, the waves, shaking their frothy manes, hasten to bar the misty horizon; and the large sea-gulls hover over the river with sharp cries—the sinister messengers of the abyss that is to swallow it." (François Coppé, *The River.*)

After serving the various creatures of the globe in the form of cloud, dew, rain, snow, and ice, we here behold the original droplets of vapor returning again to their parent—the ocean. "All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea doth not overflow; unto the place from whence the rivers come, they return, to flow again" (Eccles. 1, 7).

## CHAPTER VII

### THE OCEAN

As we take our stand, somewhat bewildered, and gaze out upon the vast expanse of water before us, the ocean seems to read our thoughts and anticipate our reflections: "You are neither welcome nor unwelcome," it says proudly; "I do not trouble myself with the living tribes that come down to my waters. I have my own people, an older race than yours, that grows to mightier dimensions than your mastodons and elephants; more numerous than all the swarms that fill the air, or move over the thin crust of the earth. Who are you that build your gay palaces on my margin? I see your white faces as I saw the dark faces of the tribes that came before you and as I shall look on that unknown family of mankind that will come after you. And what is your whole human family but a parenthesis in a single page of my history? The rain-drops stereotyped themselves on my rocky shores before any living creature left his footprints there. What feeling have I for you? Not

scorn, not hatred, not love, not loathing. No! Indifference, blank indifference, to you and your affairs, that is my feeling, say rather absence of feeling, as regards you. Oh, yes, I will lap your feet, I will cool you in the hot summer days, I will bear you up in my strong arms, I will rock you on my rolling undulations like a babe in his cradle, and, if you wish, carry you from coast to coast. . . . Out of me all things arose; sooner or later into me all things subside. All changes around me; I change not. I look at you, vain man, and your frail transitory concerns, save in momentary glimpses, as I look on the white face of my dead mistress, whom I follow as the bridegroom follows the bier of her who has changed her nuptial raiment for the shroud." (O. W. Holmes in the *Atlantic Monthly*.)

Perplexed at these haughty and contemptuous words of the awe-inspiring sovereign before us, we will ask the illustrious Byron to make answer:

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll!  
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;  
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control  
Stops with the shore;—upon the watery plain  
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain  
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,

When for a moment, like a drop of rain,  
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,  
Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown.

His steps are not upon thy paths—thy fields  
Are not a spoil for him—thou dost arise  
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields  
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,  
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,  
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray,  
And howling, to his gods, where haply lies  
His petty hope in some near port or bay,  
And dashest him again to earth: there let him lay.

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls  
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake  
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,—  
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make  
Their clay creator the vain title take  
Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war,—  
These are thy toys, and as the snowy flake,  
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar  
Alike the Armada's pride, or spoils of Trafalgar.

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee—  
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?  
Thy waters wasted them while they were free,  
And many a tyrant since: their shores obey  
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay  
Has dried up realms to deserts;—not so thou,  
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play.  
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow;  
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form  
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,  
Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,  
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime  
Dark-heaving,—boundless, endless, and sublime;  
The image of eternity, the throne  
Of the Invisible: even from out of thy slime  
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone  
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

—Lord Byron.

The ocean, whilst listening to this meed of praise, appeared to swell with ever-increasing pride. Anon he seemed in a pensive and melancholy mood. Brooding over his inglorious triumphs and the countless human victims that lie beneath his mighty billows he bewails his restless fate, and envies the vast blue sea o'erhead; the carefree ether makes prompt reply:

Why is it that, unruffled still,  
The welkin's brow I see,  
Whilst mine, with racking wind and tide,  
Deep furrowed oft must be?

Her richest gems, by night displayed,  
Man's filching grasp defy;  
But safety for my treasures none,  
Though buried deep they lie.

The hands that from her diadem  
In reverence recoil,

Are bold my depths to penetrate  
And of their wealth despoil.

A thousand ships with cruel keel  
My writhing waves divide,  
And mariner hath never steered  
Athwart her tranquil tide.

Why is it thus, that rest to her  
And toil to me is given—  
That she the blessing ever meets,  
And I, the curse of Heaven?

The Ether heard. Through all her depths  
A deeper azure spread,  
And to the murmuring Ocean thus,  
With radiant smile, she said:

Who cleaveth to the earth, as thou,  
Ne'er knows tranquillity;  
Naught pulses in my bosom wide  
But God, whose own am I!

—Father Tabb.

## CHAPTER VIII

### REVERIE

ONCE again we turn to the vast expanse before us. But, this time with an awakened sense of our superiority and innate dignity: How insignificant, after all, are the waters of the ocean, and the entire world besides, compared with man and his eternal destiny! True! We greet both with joy: The translucent droplets that bubble forth from the earth and eventually find their way into the ocean, and the frail babe launched out upon the stream of life which will sooner or later land it upon the haven of eternity. But, what a difference in the nature and destiny of the two!

Hail, crystal rill! With joy shalt fill  
The eager band, in air and land,  
Along thy course from virgin source  
Unto the lea and deep blue sea.

Travail on earth—a human birth!  
Another life begins the strife.  
Now each flows on—a rhythmic song—  
A bringing cheer both far and near.

Thou, wooed anew, in gems of dew,  
Or pearly rain, dost come again  
And help for aye the orb of day  
To raise man's crops and feed his flocks.

Yet, with the sun thy course shall run,  
Ere crown is won and man's work done;  
Thy journey's end makes thee descend,  
For Nature's all spells constant fall!

But man shall see eternity  
Since in God's eye deeds cannot die.  
A holy fire must needs aspire  
To heights sublime and goal divine.

Realizing man's sublime destiny—from God to God—is there anyone who would not readily subscribe to the following:

And as I walked the ocean strand—  
With pearly shell in trembling hand  
I stooped and wrote upon the sand  
My name, the year, the day.  
As homeward from the spot I passed  
One lingering look behind I cast;  
A wave came rolling high and fast,  
And washed my lines away.

And so methought, 'twill shortly be  
With every mark on earth from me;  
A wave of dark oblivion's sea  
Will sweep across the place  
Where I have trod the sandy shore

Of Time,—and been, to be no more,—  
Of me, my day, the name I bore,  
To leave no track nor trace.

And yet with Him who counts the sands  
And holds the ocean in His hands  
I know a lasting record stands  
Inscribed against my name,  
Of all this mortal past here wrought,  
Of all this thinking soul has thought,  
And from these fleeting moments caught  
For glory or for shame.

—Hannah Gould.

Not for shame, however, but for glory. Not despair, but hope, must be the fruit of this reverie. How else could our contemplation on water be a fountain of joy! We can, if we will, rise superior to any of the elements taken singly, or to all of them combined! Man has been made in the image of God in a manner more perfect than the ocean or any other inanimate creature. Man's sublime origin and destiny are from God to God—from God the Creator to God the Consummator. Therefore we are not to leave this vast, heaving, restless mass of water in a confused state of mind, as if we were vanquished by it.

Water even in this amazing volume is to be our servitor. The ocean, no less than its tiniest

offspring, must help us attain our high and noble destiny. We belong to the Lord, "who hath measured the waters in His Hand" (Is. 40, 12), and "gathereth the waters of the seas together" (Ps. 33, 7). "Who shut up the sea with doors, when it broke forth as issuing out of the womb? When I made a cloud the garment thereof, and wrapped it in a mist as in swaddling bands? I set my bounds around it and made it bars and doors; and I said: Hitherto thou shalt come and shalt go no farther, and here thou shalt break thy swelling waves" (Job 38). God "hath bound the waters together as in a garment" (Prov. 30, 4), in order that they may be serviceable to man. The waters of the earth, as all things else, have been made for man; man, however, has been made for God.

The Infinite One alone can satisfy our yearning for the fulness of life. All else therefore in the world is meant to help us gain possession of the Supreme Good: "This is eternal life, to know Thee, O God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." The incomprehensible good of eternal bliss or the possession of God, is the goal and destiny of every human being. The joys of Heaven are within our reach, if only we exert ourselves to obtain them. The light of

that heavenly Jerusalem must, therefore, ever be a beacon to us on the hazardous voyage from time to eternity.

Some years ago the writer had the pleasure of entering the English Channel on a beautiful summer evening under a serene and cloudless sky. Not a wave ruffled the mirror-like surface of the ocean; and the sun, still shining pleasantly in the horizon, seemed to congratulate us on our safe arrival and to bid us a hearty welcome to the land of our forefathers. It was a most charming sight to behold the hundreds of steamers and sailing-vessels coming together from all parts of the world. They had victoriously withstood the violence of wind and gale, successfully escaped the dangers of rocks and cliffs, and were now majestically sailing into harbor.

On the wharf hundreds of smiling countenances were eager to greet their returning relatives and friends. What a delight again to see and embrace those who had been so long absent! Great though such a temporal joy may be, like all temporal joys it is short-lived and of little worth. Such a joy, and be it ever so great, vanishes with the cause; we hardly obtain possession of it, when it is already gone.

But there is another harbor towards which

we are, or ought to be sailing. The safe arrival at that haven will bring a lasting and perfect joy. Ah, let us never lose sight of that blessed goal! There our celestial Mother is interceding for us; there the angels and saints are busied in our welfare; there kind friends, and, perhaps, loving parents are anxiously awaiting our arrival—watching and praying that we may escape the many hazards of life's voyage. There a brilliant throne and an immortal crown are awaiting the successful voyager.

Nor need we in sadness bide the time when that heavenly glory will be revealed in all its supernal fulgence. Already now we can, with God's grace, preserve our souls in tranquil poise and true joy. Even now, amid the noisy turmoil of a pre-occupied world, we can, if we will, possess and radiate the light of the heavenly Jerusalem. With God's grace this is possible in every office, station or profession. In fact, the poor, the lowly, and the humble can entertain the greater hope of that blessed destiny.

A lake upon a mountain lay,  
So still and silent all the day,  
So hidden in the densest wood,  
I could not see that aught of good  
That little lake was meant to do;

## FOUNTAINS OF JOY

Deep down into its waters blue,  
 I looked and thought and wondered why  
 The Lord had hid it there so high,  
 With none to see it save the sky.

Down in the valley silver streams  
 Went leaping by with flashing gleams  
 To turn full many a busy mill  
 That hummed with motion never still :  
 They watered, too, the thirsting kine,  
 Refreshed the fields that else would pine ;  
 And yet the lake so silent lay  
 To all of earth hid far away ;  
 What did it do the livelong day ?

It mirrored heaven. Is that enough ?  
 Those tranquil waters, never rough,  
 Nor stirred by breezes at their play,  
 Lay smooth as glass through all the day ;  
 And when the varied scenes of light  
 Gave place to beauties of the night,  
 The stars looked down and paused to know  
 Where now their circling steps should go,  
 Through skies above, or skies below.

O lovely lake, abide in calm,  
 Let not a ripple stir thy charm,  
 In thy still bosom closely hold  
 Each light and shade the heavens unfold.  
 O faithful mirror, silent be,  
 The Lord will please Himself with thee ;  
 Rest on thy mountain far and high

With naught above thee save the sky;  
It is enough to meet God's eye.

—Anonymous.

Let us then dwell far from earth and nigh to heaven. Our “conversation” is to “be above.” The waters of the earth must needs flow downward; the stream of human life, however, is to tend onward and upward till it reaches the ocean of eternal bliss.

We can, then, if we choose, make water a fountain of temporal and eternal joy by keeping our inmost soul attuned to that beautiful canticle which glorifies God for water’s manifold and beneficent services:

*Psalm One Hundred and Three*

Bless the Lord, O my soul: O Lord my God, Thou art exceedingly great. Thou hast put on praise and beauty: and art clothed with light as with a garment.

Who stretchest out the heaven like a pavilion: Who coverest the higher rooms thereof with water.

Who makest the clouds Thy chariot: Who walkest upon the wings of the winds.

Who hast founded the earth upon its own bases: it shall not be moved forever and ever.

The deep like a garment is its clothing:

above the mountains shall the waters stand.

At Thy rebuke they shall flee: at the voice of Thy thunder they shall fear.

The mountains ascend, and the plains descend into the place which Thou hast founded for them.

Thou hast set a bound which they shall not pass over; neither shall they return to cover the earth.

Thou sendest forth springs in the vales: between the midst of the hills the waters shall pass.

All the beasts of the field shall drink: the wild asses shall expect in their thirst.

Over them the birds of the air shall dwell: from the midst of the rocks they shall give forth their voices.

Thou waterest the hills from Thy upper rooms: the earth shall be filled with the fruit of Thy works:

Bringing forth grass for cattle, and herbs for the service of men.

That Thou mayest bring bread out of the earth, and that wine may cheer the heart of man.

That he may make the face cheerful with oil; and that bread may strengthen man's heart.

The trees of the field shall be filled, and the cedars of Libanus which He hath planted: there the sparrows shall make their nests. . . .

How great are Thy works, O Lord! Thou hast made all things in wisdom: the earth is filled with Thy riches.

So is this great sea, which stretcheth wide its arms: there are creeping things without number:

Creatures little and great: There the ships shall go.

This sea-dragon which Thou hast formed to play therein: all expect of Thee that Thou give them food in season.

What Thou givest to them they shall gather up: when Thou openest Thy hand, they shall all be filled with good. . . .

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.



**SECOND PART—SACRAMENTAL  
WATER**



## INTRODUCTION

MANY of the truths that are either explained or implied in this part of FOUNTAINS OF JOY can be known only from Faith. It may be well, therefore, to remind the reader that there can be no lasting opposition between the truths of Revelation and those of science: "If conflicting knowledges were instilled by God, our intellect would thereby be hindered from knowing the truth. And this cannot be ascribed to God. Things that are natural are unchangeable so long as nature remains. Now contrary opinions cannot be together in the same subject. Therefore God does not instill into man any opinion or belief contrary to natural knowledge. Hence the Apostle says (Rom. 10, 8): 'The word is nigh thee even in thy heart and in thy mouth. This is the word of faith which we preach.' And St. Augustine adds: 'That which truth (science) shall make known can nowise be in opposition to the Holy Books whether of the Old or of the New Testament.'" (St. Thomas, *Summa Philosophica*, V, i, c. 7.) Knowing that scientific truth cannot be

in lasting opposition to revealed truth we will now consider the nature, uses and effects of water that is blest by the Catholic Church for religious purposes.

All the material substances of the universe owe their existence to one and the same benevolent Creator and form a grand harmonious unit. The inanimate creatures of God by their very nature are obedient to physical laws, and thus produce a symphony of praise to Him who made them. Were our knowledge as comprehensive as is that of an angel, in all probability we could then understand how the annihilation of even a single one of the countless non-sentient creatures would disturb, however slightly, the inter-dependent action and harmony of the material universe. It would be like destroying one of the keys or strings of a gigantic musical instrument played by a master musician.

What skill, O God, could equal Thine!  
    No two alike, in size or line,  
In dome above, in sea or land,  
    'Mid flaming worlds, or grains of sand.

And man hast made more wondrous far,  
    More varied than flower, bird, or star;  
His very finger-tips' design,  
    Reveals a loving skill divine.

If we view things as coming from the all-wise God and meant to help us work out our salvation, they will enkindle our hearts with true love and reverence. It was this aspect of the material creation and of man's sovereign dignity that inspired the saints with a loving regard for all things created. They were urged by what they saw in nature to give unceasing glory to the all-good Creator. St. Francis of Assisi, for instance, was wont to call upon the earth, sea, and sky, and all that they contain to praise the Lord. Again, he would enumerate the various creatures he could think of, and in turn thank God for each one of them.

The Poverello had a veritable reverence, too, for water. He loved it in a special manner because "it is the material element of Baptism and suggests penitential tears that purify the soul." Whenever this holy man washed his hands, he was careful not to spill any of the water upon the ground lest it might become trodden under foot. Had we a similar appreciation of water, we would, at least now and then, find true joy in contemplating this beneficent gift of God.

# CHAPTER I

## WATER AND RELIGION

### *I. Water as a Symbol of Religious Truths*

#### A. In the Old Testament

THE Almighty is often praised and glorified in Holy Writ as the Creator and Ruler of the waters of the earth: "Thou hast visited the earth, and plentifully watered it" (Job 38, 28). How beautiful the Biblical descriptions of the four seasons, which, as we all know, are conditioned by the hydrosphere surrounding the earth. Listen to the rapturous song of spring in the Canticles (2, 8-13) : "The voice of my Beloved, behold He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills. My Beloved is like a roe or young hart. Behold He standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices. Behold my Beloved speaketh to me : Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come. For winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared, the time of

pruning is come; the voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land; the fig tree hath put forth her green figs; the vines in flower yield their sweet smell. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come."

The exquisite beauty, too, of several verses of Psalm 147, in which God's Providence over water is extolled, could scarcely be equaled: "He giveth snow like wool; scattereth mists like ashes. He sendeth His crystal like morsels: who shall stand before the face of His cold? He shall send out His word, and shall melt them: His wind shall blow, and the waters shall run."

The religious-minded of the Old Law habitually associated the phenomena of water with the truths of Revelation. Already long before the Saviour's blessed advent, the ardent yearning of the nations found expression in the prayer: "Ye heavens, rain down the Just One!" And the blessings that the Just One would bring were beheld in vision by the prophet as "a river of water, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God" (Apoc. 22, 1). "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth." The expression, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain" (Deut. 22), signified the enriching

and life-giving virtue of the Revealed Word.

Let us, then, reverently approach the “living waters” foretold by Zachary (14, 8), “as going out from Jerusalem”; or again, referred to by St. John: “To him that thirsteth, I will give of the fountain of the water of life, freely” (Apoc. 21, 6). “He that thirsteth let him come; and he that will, let him take the water of life freely” (Apoc. 22, 17).

True, the use of water as a symbol of religious truths, or as a supposed means of obtaining spiritual cleanliness, is found not only among the nations of Faith; we find this belief also among the pagan nations of ancient as well as of modern times. A purifying water figured largely in the religions of the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. Wherever the beauty or necessity of interior purity was taught by means of symbolism, there, too, we find that a religious use was made of a “holy” or “purifying” water.

The custom is in vogue among some heathen and pagan nations of our day. Modern Hindoos, for example, look upon the Ganges as a sacred river, and they believe that their souls are purified when they bathe in its waters. As water cleanses the body from material stains, so the water of the Ganges, when used from a

motive of religion, is supposed by them to cleanse from spiritual defilement.)

"We shall be far indeed from scorning or reviling the impulse which gave rise to any of these ancient and modern forms of worship. They prove two things; the passionate out-stretch of the soul after God, and the helplessness of human nature, left to itself, to attain Him. They prove, also, that man knows he is sinful, and needs penance of his own, and redemption from his God, and purification even beyond the grave, as he journeys to the final joy." (C. Tr. Soc. Pamphlet.)

Such pagan customs or superstitious beliefs should not, therefore, militate against the symbolic and sacramental use of water as approved or recommended by the one true Church of God. Our very nature, constituted as it is of body and soul, requires that we resort to symbolism in things religious and supernatural. That all nations, whether pagan, Jewish, or Christian, make use of symbols in the worship of the Deity proves that men are not purely spiritual, but composed of body and soul.

### B. In the New Testament

Our Lord Himself made use of symbolism. He frequently referred to His doctrine and to

divine grace as a “water unto life everlasting.” The truths of Revelation, He says, are a spiritual drink endowed with the necessary virtue to support and develop the supernatural life, without which no man shall see God. On a certain occasion “Jesus cometh to a city of Samaria, which is called Sichar, near the land which Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well. It was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria, to draw water. Jesus saith to her: Give me to drink. For His disciples were gone into the city to buy meats. Then that Samaritan woman saith to Him: How dost Thou, being a Jew, ask of me to drink, who am a Samaritan woman? For the Jews do not communicate with the Samaritans. Jesus answered, and said to her: If thou didst know the gift of God, and who He is that saith to thee, give Me to drink, thou perhaps wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. The woman saith to Him: Sir, thou hast nothing wherein to draw, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children and his cattle? Jesus answered, and

said to her: Whoever drinketh of this water, shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst forever; but the water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting" (St. John 4, 5-14).

This saving water springing up into life everlasting is offered mankind everywhere and in great abundance. The followers of Jesus Christ and all who wish to become worthy of His promises, are obliged to draw on the salutary fountains of Faith: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

There are no means of supernatural life here below save those given us by Jesus Christ: "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink. . . . The Blessed Redeemer seems to say to each one of us, 'come, my child, come and drink and be inebriated.' Come and drink from these fountains, by which, under the veil of faith, I communicate My own life to you here below, until the day on which all symbols having disappeared, I will Myself conduct thee to the torrent of My beatitude in the eternal brightness of My glory and majesty."

If the human soul is to develop and attain moral perfection it must have congenial food and drink. Its essential and wholesome bever-

age are the truths of Revelation. These truths were conceived in the mind of the omniscient God, and are consequently unchangeable. If accepted by man, they will give him spiritual life, health and vigor. The truths of Faith may, therefore, be compared with the pure water of a perennial spring that flows direct from its virgin source in the eternal mountains of God and brings joy and sustenance to all men of good will.

## *2. Water as Symbol of Supernatural Grace*

The "fountains," however, from which man is "to drink with joy" signify not only the doctrine of Jesus Christ or the truths of Revelation. The Holy Spirit, too, in the souls of the just is rightly called a "Living Fountain"; for, by His gracious presence in the soul He enables man to grow, develop, and become morally perfect: "The Holy Spirit, whom Christ, as the Word, sends us, is within us the principle, the source of those rivers of living water,—of the grace which springs up within us into life everlasting, and enables us to bear the fruits of everlasting life. . . . Whilst awaiting the supreme beatitude, these waters make 'joyful the city of souls' (Ps. 45, 5). St. Paul says,

too, that all faithful souls or those who believe in Christ, have ‘in one Spirit . . . all been made to drink’ (I Cor. 12, 13). That is why the liturgy, the echo of the teaching of Jesus and of the Apostles, causes us to invoke the Holy Spirit, who is also the Spirit of Jesus, as the ‘Living Spring.’” (*Marmion, Christ the Life of the Soul*, p. 122.)

Jesus Himself refers to the indwelling Spirit as a source of living water :

“The Feast of Tabernacles was still progressing. . . . Every morning during the seven days of the Feast a priest descended to the well-spring of Siloe, and in a golden vessel drew up three measures of water from the fountain, with which he returned, bearing it before him in solemn state. Upon his entrance within the porches the trumpets sounded, accompanying him with the wild clash of their symphonies, while he mounted to the highest step of the Altar; there two great jars had been already set forth, one made of silver, into which the ministering priest poured the water brought from Siloe; the other of gold, which he filled with wine. These libations once performed, the whole people intoned the Hallel, waving their rustling palm-branches, and giving way to such glad transports of feeling that the Rabbis tell

us it is impossible for one who never witnessed it to conceive the universal sense of joy.

"But on the eighth day, this ceremony no longer took place; those who, in the early morning ascended to the Temple to offer sacrifice, instead of the joyous songs and chanting, found a religious stillness brooding over the Sanctuary. This was the moment Jesus chose to explain the meaning of the sacred rite. Standing in the center of the porches He cried aloud: 'If anyone thirst let him come to Me, and let him drink! He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'

"'He was speaking,' adds the Evangelist, 'of the Holy Spirit which His disciples were to receive'; and this, He said, would no longer be like that weak spring-water, but like a mighty river which should fill them with overflowing gifts of grace.

"This utterance made a deep impression upon the people; more than one heart waiting there had long yearned after waters which would not flee away and vanish, like those of Siloe; and even so in their Sacred Oracles they had discerned certain obscure inklings as to a promised never-failing Fountain, wherfrom the streams of truth and of grace should flow

for all alike." (Abbé Fouard, *The Christ, the Son of God*, Vol. II, pp. 50 sqq.) Thus we see that the term "living water" was used frequently, at times signifying the revealed word of God, or again the grace and spiritual benefits of the indwelling Spirit.

But what about the Deluge? No doubt, very many were saved because of that awful visitation, who would have died in their sins, had God not punished them in that way. Then again, the power of God appears peculiarly great in using the "self-same element both to put an end to vice and implant virtue." Let us piously meditate on the Biblical narrative of that dreadful chastisement: "God seeing that the wickedness of men was great on the earth, and that all the thought of their heart was bent upon evil at all times, it repented Him that He made man on the earth. And being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart, He said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, from man even to beasts, from the creeping things even to the fowl of the air, for it repenteth me that I have made them.' But Noe found grace before the Lord. . . . And when God had seen that the earth was corrupted (for all flesh had corrupted its way on the earth) God said to Noe:

'The end of all flesh is come before me, the earth is filled with iniquity through them, and I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of timber planks. . . . Behold I will bring the waters of a great flood upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life under heaven. All things that are in the earth shall be consumed. And I will establish My covenant with thee; and thou shalt enter into the ark, thou and thy sons and thy wife and the wives of thy sons with thee. And of every living creature of all flesh thou shalt bring two of a sort into the ark, that they may live with thee: of the male sex and the female. Of fowls according to their kind, and of beasts in their kind, and of everything that creepeth on the earth according to its kind; two of every sort shall go in with thee that they may live. Thou shalt take unto thee of all food that may be eaten, and thou shalt lay it up with thee; and it shall be food for thee and them.' And Noe did all things which God commanded him. And he was ~~six~~ hundred years old when the waters of the flood overflowed the earth. All the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the floodgates of heaven were opened. And the rain fell upon the earth forty

days and forty nights. . . . And the ark was carried upon the waters.

"And the waters prevailed beyond measure on the earth: and all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. The water was fifteen cubits higher than the mountains, which it covered. And all flesh was destroyed that moved on the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beasts, and of all creeping things that creep on the earth; and Noe only remained, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed on the earth a hundred and fifty days. And God remembered Noe, and all the living creatures, and all the cattle which were with him in the ark, and brought a wind upon the earth, and the waters were abated.

"And God spoke to Noe, saying: 'Go out of the ark, thou and thy wife, thy sons, and the wives of thy sons with thee. All living things that are with thee of all flesh, as well in fowls as in beasts, and all creeping things that creep on the earth, bring out with thee, and go ye upon the earth; increase and multiply it.' So Noe went out, he and his sons, and his wife, and the wives of his sons with him; and all living things, and cattle, and creeping things that creep on the earth, according to their

kinds, went out of the ark. And Noe built an altar unto the Lord : and taking of all cattle and fowls that were clean, offered holocausts upon the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour." ( Gen. VI-VIII.)

This sacred narrative surely inspires the believer with a wholesome fear of offending God as well as a childlike confidence in Divine Providence. We, too, possess the awful gift of freewill, whose abuse brought on the Deluge. And, how easy it is for man to become unfaithful to the Creator by idolizing the creature of a day, or the passion of a moment? The time of penance for those who perished in the Deluge is forever gone. We, who likewise have sinned, can still obtain pardon; but we must avail ourselves of the "living water" offered by Jesus Christ if we would rid ourselves of the guilt or punishment of our sins. The ark of salvation—the Church—is ever ready to receive the penitent sinner and to bring him to the feet of the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

In that greatest of all temporal punishments—the Deluge—God made use of the element of water to advance man's spiritual interests. When we read the sacred narrative in the light of faith we learn that the universal flood was sent to quench the flame of lust and inordinate

passion, which otherwise would have been a source of greater and more numerous evils to mankind.

Now, however, we know that the human family will not be destroyed again in that dread manner. So long as we see water, in the form of the rainbow, span earth and heaven with beautiful tints and colors, we know that a universal flood shall not recur. Not as if this phenomenon had never appeared in the heavens prior to the Deluge; there were rainbows in ante-diluvian times, as there are now; but then they had not as yet received the character (of a covenant between God and man) After the Deluge,

When o'er the green undeluged earth  
Heaven's covenant thou didst shine,  
How came the world's gray fathers forth  
To watch thy sacred sign!

And when its yellow luster smiled  
O'er mountains yet untrod,  
Each mother held aloft her child  
To bless the bow of God.

—Thomas Campbell.

Yes, let us thank God for giving us that loving covenant. By renewing it so often, the Heavenly Father wishes to remind us again

and again that there will be no recurrence of a universal flood.

The sun and clouds weave rainbow lace  
Lest man the path to Heaven miss ;  
But, tears for sin aglow with grace  
Reveal a surer path to bliss.

## CHAPTER II

### HOLY WATER A SACRAMENTAL

IN imitation of her Divine Founder, the Church makes use of material things and symbolical signs or ceremonies in the practice of religion. She has substituted, in place of pagan rites and festivals, feasts and holydays in honor of Christ and the Saints. How empty and vicious the worship paid the so-called divine heroes, or the pagan gods of popular vices! How sublime, on the other hand, the festivals that have taken their place! These now remind us annually of our duty as Christians to imitate the noble examples of Our Lord and the Saints.

Especially in her more solemn services and devotions does the Christian Religion make frequent use of symbolic signs and ceremonies. On the Feast of the Nativity, for example, the Church emphasizes the need of using perceptible things to arrive at a more perfect knowledge of things invisible when, in the Preface of the Mass, she sings: "By the mystery of the

Word made flesh, from Thy brightness a new light hath arisen to shine on the eyes of our soul, in order that, God becoming visible to us, we may be borne upward to the love of things invisible." Here we have one of the chief reasons why the one true Church of the one true God has from the earliest times blessed water to be used for religious purposes.

### *1. The Blessing of the Font*

The Catholic religion distinguishes four kinds of holy water, each of which is prepared by a special blessing prescribed in the Ritual.

Gregorian Water has its name from Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241), who made its use obligatory in the consecration of churches. When it is being blest, wine, ashes, and salt are mixed with it. Its preparation is reserved to the bishop, as, also, is its use in consecrating churches, or reconciling a church building that has become profaned.

Owing to the more common and frequent use of Baptismal Water, Easter and Pentecost Water, and ordinary Holy Water, we will describe the preparation of each one of these four sacramentals.

We know that water is endowed with a spiritual virtue all its own. By giving to water a regenerative power the Son of God made it the most excellent of all liquid bodies. "Owing to Christ's infinite power—through contact with His flesh the regenerative power (effective in Baptism)—entered not only into the waters which came in contact with Christ, but into all waters throughout the whole world during all future ages." (St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, P. III, q. 78, a. 5.) "St. Augustine, in a sermon on Epiphany, says: 'The blessing that flowed from the Saviour's Baptism, like a mystic river, swelled the course of every stream, and filled the channels of every spring.' . . . Thus did Christ's power flow into all waters, not by reason of connection of place, but by likeness of species." (*Ibid.*, q. 62, a. 4.)

The water prescribed to be used for baptizing is blessed twice a year, *i. e.*, on the eve of Easter and of Pentecost. The ceremony is called the "blessing of the font." After blessing the water to be taken home and used by the faithful, the officiating priest prepares the baptismal water, which is used in administering the first and most necessary of the Sacraments.

*The Blessing of Easter, Pentecost,  
and Baptismal Water*

On the eves of Easter and Pentecost the "blessing of the font" takes place. By this term is meant the preparing of Baptismal, Easter, and Pentecostal Water according to the prescribed prayers and ceremonies of the Church. The invocations addressed by the Church to the Almighty Father when blessing the water to be used in baptizing are sublime and trenchant. The following English translation of the prayers to be said when baptismal water is blessed, together with an explanation of the ceremonies, are taken chiefly from the Catholic Truth Society pamphlet "The Holy Saturday Service," by Rev. C. C. Martindale, S.J.

The priest prefaces the ceremony of "The Blessing of the Font" on Holy Saturday by blessing the new fire, the triple and paschal candles, and by the reading of the twelve prophecies. In these prophecies, which are taken from the Old Testament, we find narrated the spiritual history of the world, and an account of several miracles wrought by means of water.

Very appropriately is the reading of the prophecies enjoined as a prelude to the Bless-

ing of the Font. (Man, by means of Baptism, is delivered from the land of bondage, the thraldom of Satan, and made a child of God.) The strong contrast existing between the states of bondage and liberty is brought out not only in these prophecies, but also in the ritual prayers to be used by the officiating priest. This is the case more especially in regard to the fourth prophecy, which runs as follows: "In those days it came to pass in the morning watch, and behold the Lord looking upon the Egyptian army, through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, slew their host and overthrew the wheels of the chariots, and they were carried into the deep. And the Egyptians said: Let us flee from Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them against us. And the Lord said to Moses: stretch forth thy hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and horsemen. And when Moses had stretched forth his hand towards the sea, it returned at the first break of day to the former place; and as the Egyptians were fleeing away, the waters came upon them, and the Lord shut them up in the middle of the waves. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots and the horsemen of all the army of Pharaoh, who had come into the sea after them, neither did

there so much as one of them remain. But the children of Israel marched through the midst of the sea upon dry land, and the waters were to them as a wall on the right hand and on the left; and the Lord delivered Israel in that day out of the hands of the Egyptians. And they saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore, and the mighty hand that the Lord had used against them; and the people feared the Lord, and they believed the Lord, and Moses His servant.

“Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this canticle to the Lord, and said: Let us sing to the Lord, for He is glorious and triumphant: The horse and the rider He hath cast into the sea: He is become my Help, my Protector, and my Rescue. This is my God and I will honor Him: the God of my father, and I will extol Him. He is the Lord that destroys wars: the Lord is His name’ (Exodus 14 and 15).

“Let us pray. O God, whose ancient marvels we perceive to shine forth even into our own times, since what by the right hand of Thy power Thou didst confer upon one people that required to be freed from the persecution of the Egyptians, Thou dost now effect through the water in the rebirth unto the salvation of the nations; grant that the whole world may

pass over into the rank of Abraham's descendants, and the prerogatives of Israel. Through . . . Amen."

Having read the prophecies, the priest puts on a purple cope and goes to the font. As he proceeds the following is sung (Ps. 41) : "Even as the stag longs for the fountains of water, so does my soul long for Thee, O God.

"V. My soul thirsts for the living God : when shall I come, and appear before the face of God?

"R. My tears were my bread by day and by night : while every day men said to me : Where is thy God?"

(These verses were chosen not merely because the word "font" occurs in them, but because of the strange old legend that the stag attacked and ate its hereditary enemy, the serpent, and thereafter needed to slake its thirst. Baptism means not only the death of Death,—the "dying" to an old and merely natural life, but a union with God, the source of all life, and that of grace in particular. Though God is never absent from any of His creatures, a soul without grace is relatively dead, St. John says that Baptism brings, quite simply, a New Birth. This is the keynote of all that follows.)

Arrived at the font, the priest says :

"V. The Lord be with you ;

"R. And with thy spirit.

"Let us pray. Almighty, everlasting God,

look graciously upon the piety of Thy people coming to their new birth, and, like the stag, desirous of the fountain of Thy waters, mercifully grant that their thirst for the faith, by means of the mystery of Baptism, may sanctify both their body and their soul. Through. . . . Amen.

"V. The Lord be with you;

"R. And with thy spirit.

"Let us pray. Almighty, everlasting God, be present at the sacred ritual of Thy great love, be present at Thy mysteries; and, for the new begetting of a new people that the font of Baptism brings forth to Thee, send forth Thy Spirit of adoption, so that what has to be done through the ministry of our lowliness, may be brought to fulness by the energizing of Thy power. Through. . . . Amen.

"V. The Lord be with you;

"R. And with Thy spirit.

"V. Lift up your hearts;

"R. We hold them up to the Lord.

"V. Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God;

"R. Right is it and just:

"Truly right is it and just, fit and for our weal, that we should at all times and every-

where give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, eternal God, who with invisible power dost wonderfully work Thy mysteries' effect; and, unworthy though we be for the service of so high a ritual, yet do Thou not abandon the gifts of Thy favor, but to our prayers bend down in love and hear us.

"O God, whose Spirit at the very first beginnings of the world did brood upon the waters, that even then the element of water might absorb power to consecrate; God, who when cleansing the sins of a wicked world by water, didst stamp the semblance of a new birth upon the very out-pouring of the flood, that the strange power of one and the self-same element might achieve both the ending of vice and the origin of virtue, look down, O Lord, upon the face of Thy Church, and multiply within her Thy new births who by the torrent of Thine forth-streaming grace dost give gladness to Thy city, and dost open a source of Baptism for the re-creation of the whole world's peoples, so that at Thy Majesty's behest it may receive Thy Sole-begotten's grace from the Holy Spirit."

(Here the priest divides the water with his outstretched hand in the shape of a cross. There can be no doubt as to

the origin of this piece of symbolism. The Holy Spirit is often called the "Hand" or "Finger of God" ("*digitus paternae dexteræ*"), and over sculptures representing the Sacrament of Baptism this Hand of God is often to be seen. Hence the plunging of the priest's hand into the water symbolizes the sending by the Eternal Father of His Holy Spirit into those who, from that font, are to be baptized.)

"Continuing, the priest says: Mayest Thou by the secret infusion of Thy divine power make fruitful this water that we have prepared for imparting a new birth unto men; so that, conceived in holiness, from the stainless womb of this most sacred font a heavenly offspring may come forth, reborn into a new creation, and that Grace—their mother—may bear all, whether sex divide them in body, or age in years, equally unto one new childhood. Far hence, O Lord, at Thy command, depart every unclean spirit; far hence let all the wickedness of Satan's snares withdraw. Let not any adverse power intrude itself into any portion of this place, nor haunt it round about, nor lie in wait for it. Let it not lurk, nor stealthily slink in; let it not infect nor corrupt it."

(The priest here touches the water with his hand. This is a very ancient detail; in law courts, for example, the Romans always touched the particular object they were speaking of, or its symbol. Here the priest's touch symbolizes that of God, the source of power.)

"Let this harmless and holy creature be free from onslaught of the foe, and purified by the departure of every kind of evil. Be this a fount of life, a water of new birth, a stream of purification, that all who are to be washed in this laver of salvation may, by the working of the Holy Spirit within them, achieve the mercy of a total cleansing. Wherefore I bless thee, creature Water, by the Living God † the True God † the Holy God † by God who at the beginning did separate thee from the dry land, whose Spirit brooded over thee."

(He divides the water with his hand, and sprinkles it towards the four quarters of the world. This action at once symbolizes the total cleansing of the universe, and recalls as a further symbol the four rivers that flowed this way and that through Paradise, watering the whole Garden: "And a river went out of the place of pleasure to water Paradise, which from thence is divided into four heads" (Gen. 2, 10.)

"Who caused thee to flow from the source of Paradise and bade thee, in four streams to water the whole earth. Who, by infusing sweetness into thee, that wast so bitter in the wilderness, fitted thee for drink, and, from the rock, brought thee forth for the thirsting people. Further, I bless thee through Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who, by a splendid miracle

of His power changed thee at Cana into wine; whose feet did walk upon thee; who was baptized by Thee; who was baptized in thee by John, in the River Jordan; who brought thee forth, together with blood, from His own side; and who to His disciples gave command that in thee the faithful were to be baptized, saying: ‘Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ Do Thou, O God Almighty, be mercifully present unto us who observe these commands; do Thou graciously breathe upon us.”

(He then breathes three times upon the water in the shape of a cross, which symbolizes the Holy Spirit, who through the waters of Baptism acts upon the soul and takes up His abode therein.)

“Do Thou bless with Thy mouth this simple water; that, besides the natural cleansing which it can produce in flesh that is washed therein, it may also be efficacious for the purification of the mind.”

(Hereupon the priest dips the Paschal Candle in the water, which is meant to symbolize the descent of Christ into the Jordan for his own “baptism,” and then sings:)

“Into all the water of this font may the power of the Holy Spirit descend.”

(He withdraws the candle, and then dips it somewhat deeper, singing the same words in a higher key; finally, he dips it right down to the bottom of the font, singing the words still higher, and then thrice breathes on the water in the shape of the Greek letter Psi. Taking the candle out of the water he proceeds:)

“Here let the stains of every sin be effaced; here let nature, created in Thy likeness, and re-created unto the honor of her origin, be purged of all that which of old defiled her; that everyone who shall have entered into this Sacrament, may be born again into the new childhood of true innocence, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who is to come to judge the living and the dead, and the world by fire. Amen.”

(The priest now sprinkles the people from the water he has blessed, and then sets aside a sufficient quantity to be distributed to the faithful for private use in the home. Then he pours some of the “Oil of Catechumens” into the Holy Water which is intended for Baptismal Water and says:)

“Let this font be sanctified and made fruitful, by means of this saving oil, for them who are reborn therefrom unto eternal life. Amen.”

(Then he pours into the vessel holy chrism, as above, saying:)

"May this infusion of the chrism of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, take place in the name of the Holy Trinity. Amen."

(He now takes the flasks containing these two holy oils and pours both in together, like a cross, saying:)

"May the mingling of the chrism of consecration, the oil of anointing, and the water of baptism, take place similarly in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

(Then he mixes the oil with the water and spreads it with his hand all over the inside of the font. The "Oil of Catechumens" signifies strength and health; and the chrism, consecration. These are used in Baptism itself. The Litany of the Saints is now prayed, followed by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.)

The Holy Water that is blessed on the eves of Easter and Pentecost, and distributed to the faithful at these times, is called Easter and Pentecost Water, respectively. Its efficacy in obtaining divine help, however, is not restricted to these particular seasons only, as the names would seem to imply: "There is nothing to prohibit the preservation of Easter and Pentecostal Water for the purpose of renewing the application of the sacramental graces. These

are a call or invitation by the angel of God, as the prayer used in the blessing indicates, to guard, protect, and favor the faithful, and a petition that health, chastity, and every virtue may be the fruit of that repeated blessing. We have the testimony of early Christian writers, like St. Chrysostom, that the faithful frequently kept this blessed water during the course of the year." (*The Ecclesiastical Review*, April, 1922.)

## *2. The Ritual Blessing of Holy Water on Sundays*

Water has been made the divinely ordained matter of the first and most necessary of the Sacraments. When used as Jesus Christ directed, it has the wonderful efficacy to remove sin from the soul. All seven Sacraments were instituted by our Lord Himself. Their number is fixed for all time, and it cannot be added to, or lessened. The holy Sacraments apply the merits of Christ's Passion and death. Of and by themselves they impart to the worthy recipient the graces which Our Lord gave them the power to effect in the soul.

There is an essential difference between a Sacrament and a sacramental. The Sacraments were instituted by Jesus Christ, and produce

their effects directly; the sacramentals were introduced by the Church, and have their salutary effect on the soul through the impetratory prayers of the Church. The Church prays that the particular favors petitioned of God when sacramentals are prepared be granted to the faithful.

Nearly all theologians teach that Holy Water, used with the proper intention and disposition, confers actual graces, remits venial sin, restrains the power of Satan, and secures temporal blessings, for example, bodily health and protection against temporal evils. When preparing Holy Water, the officiating minister in the name of the whole Church prays for these divine favors in particular. Surely, then, the pious use of this "permanent sacramental" is a most helpful means of salvation.

Bearing in mind the essential difference between these two means of salvation—the Sacraments and the sacramentals—let us now consider the nature, effects, and uses of Holy Water.

Holy Water was one of the first sacramentals that the Church adopted: "On the authority of the ancient Liber Pontificalis we are told that Pope Alexander I (A.D. 109-119) refers to Holy Water in these words: 'We bless for the

use of the people water mingled with salt, and we pray God that the soul may not be corrupted by sin.' And Tertullian, an ecclesiastical writer of the second century, speaks of a custom 'common among Christians, of sprinkling themselves with water.' " The preparation of Holy Water, at times other than on Holy Saturday and on the eve of Pentecost, consists of an exorcism, certain prayers, and the mingling of blessed salt with natural water.

An exorcism is generally pronounced over any material object withdrawn from ordinary use and devoted to the service of God. This is done in order to banish the evil spirit, or to destroy his influence over such objects. By the fall of our first parents, the spirit of evil obtained influence not only over man, but also over inanimate nature, whence he is called in Scripture "the prince of this world." When the Church, therefore, exorcises an object, the curse put upon it is removed, and Satan's power over it either destroyed entirely, or at least diminished.

Holy Water is blessed every Sunday of the year in the following manner: Calling upon God for assistance, the priest makes the sign of the cross and says: "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who created heaven and

earth." After pronouncing an exorcism over the salt, he spreads his hand over it and says the following prayer: "Created element salt, by the living God, by the true God, by the holy God, by the God who commanded thee to be cast into the water by Eliseus the prophet, in order that its barrenness might be removed, I exorcise thee, that thou mayest become salt unto the healing of the faithful and mayest bring health of soul and body to all who partake of thee; and that every kind of delusion and wickedness, or craft of diabolical cunning, and every unclean spirit may depart from the place in which thou shalt be sprinkled in the name of Him who is to come to judge the living and the dead and the world by fire. Amen.

"Let us pray. We humbly implore Thy boundless clemency, O almighty and everlasting God, that of Thy bounty Thou wouldest deign to bless and hallow this element salt, which Thou hast given for the use of mankind; that it may impart health of mind and body to all who partake of it, and that whatsoever shall be touched or sprinkled with it be freed from all uncleanness and from the assaults of wicked spirits. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in unity with the Holy Ghost for ever and ever. Amen."

The Church, then, in these beautiful prayers implores almighty God that the salt which she blesses be to man's spiritual welfare; secondly, that it may be a preservative against bodily dangers and maladies of all kinds; and finally, that it may sanctify everything with which it comes in contact.

In the next prayer an exorcism and a blessing are pronounced over the water : "I exorcise thee, created element water, in the name of God the Father Almighty, and in the name of Jesus Christ, His Son, Our Lord, and in the power of the Holy Ghost, that thou mayest be able to uproot and cast out the enemy himself and his apostate angels, by the power of the same Lord Jesus Christ, who shall come to judge the living and the dead and the world by fire. Amen.

"Let us pray. O God, who for the salvation of mankind hast founded one of Thy greatest Sacraments in the element of water, graciously hear our prayers and infuse into this element, prepared for manifold purifications, the power of Thy blessing; let Thy creature, serving Thy mysteries, by divine grace be effectual for casting out devils and for curing diseases, so that on whatsoever in the homes or other places of the faithful this water shall be sprinkled, it

may be freed from everything unclean and harmful. Let not the blight of pestilence or infection find lodgment therein. Let every enemy who lieth in wait be driven forth, and if there be aught hostile to the safety and repose of the inhabitants, let it be banished at the sprinkling of this water; so that, being healed by the invocation of Thy holy name, they may be guarded from all assaults of the demon, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who in unity with Thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth for ever. Amen."

The priest then puts a little blessed salt into the water, thrice in the form of a cross, saying: "Let this become a mixture of salt and water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

"The Lord be with you; and with thy spirit.

"Let us pray. O God, the Giver of invincible strength and Lord of irresistible power, ever wonderful in Thy works, who puttest down the strength of all that rise up against Thee, who overcomest the rage of the adversary, who by Thy might gainest a victory over all his guile; we, O Lord, with fear and trembling humbly entreat Thee mercifully to look upon this mixture of salt and water, to bless it in Thy mercy, and to hallow it with the dew of Thy loving

kindness, that, wherever it shall be sprinkled by the invocation of Thy holy name, every assault of the unclean spirit may be baffled, the poison of the serpent cast out, and the presence of the Holy Ghost everywhere vouchsafed to us, who implore Thy mercy. Through our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen."

The symbolism of the union of salt and water is apparent; for, the property of water is to cleanse, that of salt to preserve, and holy Mother Church wishes that this sacramental should help free her children from sin and preserve them from a relapse. Again, water quenches fire and fosters the growth of plants; in the spiritual order Holy Water, through the graces granted to him who uses it with faith, quenches the fire of inordinate passion and promotes the growth of virtue.

## CHAPTER III

### THE USES AND EFFECTS OF HOLY WATER

#### *I. In General*

THAT the effects of a devout use of Holy Water are most desirable and salutary is taught us by the example and liturgy of the Church. Holy Water purifies and sanctifies the person who uses it in a spirit of faith and contrition. This is implied in the following prayer used by the Church in its distribution: "Thou shalt sprinkle me, O Lord, with hyssop, and I shall be made whiter than snow."

Doctors of the Church agree that Holy Water causes the remission of venial sin and of temporal punishment due to sin. "By the sprinkling of Holy Water," says St. Thomas, "the debt of venial sin is wiped out; but, not always are all temporal punishments relinquished; this takes place in accordance with the disposition of the person using it; it depends upon the degree of ardor in his love for God." Again the same holy Doctor says that

"the sprinkling of Holy Water brings about the remission of venial sins in the measure that it excites contrition." St. Alphonsus, therefore, advises all who use Holy Water to make an act of contrition, so that it may produce its purifying effects.

Holy Water is commonly prescribed in the liturgical blessings and dedications. "In many of these, too, it has a deeper meaning than at first glance appears. By the sprinkling of Holy Water, the object blest receives the same power that rests in the Holy Water. This effect can be imparted by the priest or by any believer. If the priest imparts the blessing, he does so by asking from God, in the name of the Church, particular favors to be hoped for in the object blest. If the faithful perform the ceremony, then the effects of Holy Water are merely transferred to the receiving object. The things here considered may be food, drink, medicines, or like objects." (Theiler, S. O. C., *Holy Water*, pp. 40 sqq.)

The blessings prescribed in the Ritual of the Church are usually accompanied with the sprinkling of Holy Water. Both the ring, as well as the bride and groom are thus blest at the marriage ceremony. Again, both the child and its joyful mother are blest with holy water

at the ceremony of churching. The ritual blessing for little children is concluded with the sprinkling of Holy Water upon them. In fact, every official blessing that has a certain prayer assigned to it by the Church is given with Holy Water.

The Church uses Holy Water in behalf, also, of the dead. Her prayerful hope that the soul of the deceased be sanctified unto the day of judgment is both expressed and symbolized. Such prayer and blessing is efficacious in removing the temporal punishment due to sin. At a funeral the priest receives the corpse at the door of the church, and after sprinkling the coffin with Holy Water, recites the "De Profundis." In this plaintive Psalm the abiding hope is expressed that the deceased may find mercy with God. At its conclusion the petition "Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him" is added. Again, when the priest is present whilst the corpse is being lowered into the grave, he blesses it with Holy Water and prays that "the soul of the deceased may be refreshed in the Heavenly Kingdom by almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

As Mother Church gives Holy Water to her deceased members, so it is her wish that the

faithful should bless their deceased relatives and friends. It is a pious Catholic custom for the faithful to sprinkle a corpse with Holy Water; or, when visiting the cemetery, to sprinkle the graves, saying at the same time a suitable prayer, for instance: "Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace."

## *2. In Particular*

### A. The Use of Holy Water before Mass

There is a special reason for making a devout use of Holy Water before assisting at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; hence, the Church prescribes that the priest, before beginning High Mass on Sundays, should sprinkle himself, the altar, and the faithful. There is, then, something special to be gained by using Holy Water before Mass: "The priest, the altar, and the faithful shall become, as much as possible, clean and holy for the worthy celebration of the Mass." Even if some of those present are not reached by the Holy Water used, they can, nevertheless, participate in its effects if they are desirous of doing so by rising, by bowing the head, or by making the sign of the cross.

No one can say that he is entirely worthy to offer, or to assist at, the Holy Sacrifice. If in the Old Testament those who were unclean, according to the Law, were obliged to become purified by the sprinkling of the "water of expiation" before they were permitted to assist at the sacrificial acts, how much more does the infinite holiness of the Sacrifice of the New Testament demand that all who assist thereat should first be cleansed from sin.

During the Easter season, instead of the "Asperges," the "Vidi Aquam" is intoned: "I saw water flowing from the right side of the temple, Alleluia; and all to whom that water came were saved; and they shall say, Alleluia, Alleluia." The "Vidi Aquam" was chanted in the first centuries of the Christian era, but from motives different from those of today. In ancient times it was sung by the newly baptized, who had received the Sacrament on Holy Saturday. During Easter week they "walked daily in procession to the baptismal font and there, besides other anthems, sang the 'Vidi Aquam.' "

"As the Church intones this hymn at Easter-time, she desires to direct our minds to the water of Holy Baptism, and also to that water

which flowed from the pierced side of the Saviour; likewise, to the rich source of grace, through which at Eastertime all Christendom is bedewed in spiritual renewal, expiation, and sanctification. The Alleluias of this Canticle give expression to the joy over the resurrection of our Divine Saviour. They should find their echo in the soul of every believing Christian, for through Holy Baptism the Christian rises spiritually with Christ. In a less solemn manner the Asperges is applied to the homes of the faithful on pastoral visits. When the priest enters the room of the sick, whilst reciting the Asperges, he sprinkles all present with Holy Water. He prays that by this sprinkling any possible evil influence be banished from the sick person as well as from the room occupied by him." (Theiler, S. O. C., *Holy Water*, pp. 37 sqq.)

### B. Holy Water at the Church Door

It was, perhaps, owing to a similar custom among the Jews of old that the Church introduced the font at the entrance of her temples of worship. "The Christian practice of dipping the finger in a vase containing water blest by the priest may very probably be

traced back to the rite common to the Jews of purifying themselves before they entered the temple to offer sacrifice, or to assist while it was being offered by others. God commanded Moses to make a laver of brass, which was to be placed outside the tabernacle, so that the priest might wash before offering sacrifice to God. And in connection with a certain rite we are told that he (the priest) shall take holy water in an earthen vessel, etc." (Hornyhold, S.J., *Catholic Practices*.)

The reasonableness of this universal custom must appear evident to every Christian. For, in the house of God the faithful are offered an exceptional opportunity to gain an increase of divine grace, for which Holy Water disposes the soul. If used in a spirit of faith, Holy Water will awaken a contrite disposition, purify the heart, and banish from the mind worldly thoughts which so greatly disturb devotion and recollection in prayer. Upon leaving the church, one should join with the sprinkling of Holy Water a prayer to God to preserve the religious spirit and strengthen the good resolutions formed during divine services. Thus does the Church plainly show her eager desire to help us gain the divine favors and beneficial effects she invokes when blessing Holy Water.

### C. Holy Water in the Home

The Roman Ritual admonishes the faithful to take some of the Holy Water with them from church, and to sprinkle with it the sick, their homes, and the fields; to keep it in their living apartments, and during the day bless themselves with it.

As natural water cleanses the body from material stains, so by placing Holy Water on our forehead—the noblest part of the human body—we ask God to cleanse our souls from the defilements of sin. To use Holy Water with faith and devotion is to send forth a prayer from the heart of the Church to the Heart of God. It is making use of an efficacious means also of disposing the soul for the application in the Sacraments of the Precious Blood of Jesus.

To encourage the frequent use of this sacramental the Church has endowed its pious use with an indulgence. Pope Pius IX, by a Brief dated March 23, 1876, granted "an indulgence of one hundred days to all the faithful each time that with contrite heart they shall make the sign of the cross with Holy Water, pronouncing at the same time the words, 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' "

The common benefits implored of God by the Church for those who make the proper use of Holy Water are that it may drive away demons, cure diseases, and free dwellings and their inhabitants from all evil, particularly from a plague-infected atmosphere. No Christian home, therefore, should be without frequently replenished Holy Water stoups. Should the supply have become insufficient for immediate purposes, about one-third of ordinary water may be added. Of course, religious propriety requires that the vases in which this sacramental is preserved, no less than the Holy Water itself, be kept clean and free from all foreign substances. When cleansing the fonts, the residue may be poured into the garden, or some place in the yard where it will not be exposed to disrespect or irreverence.

It were well, too, if every bedroom had its own Holy Water font. Let the Christian bless himself every morning, and again at night before retiring. It will be a powerful help in the spiritual combat. The origin of the phrase "as the devil hates holy water" is evident. Satan is commanded by the Church, which possesses the power "to loose from diabolic influence," to abandon those persons and places she blesses and makes partakers in the spiritual

benefits of Holy Water; hence, he does all in his power to hinder or restrict the use of Holy Water.

#### D. For the Benefit of the Sick

Especial care should be taken to keep Holy Water within reach of those who are seriously ill. A missionary in Ceylon has published the following account of a recent experience on a sick-call: "Once I was called to visit a sick person. The young lady was about twenty years of age. The Last Sacraments had been administered previously. As soon as I saw her, I realized that she was in her last agony. I addressed a few words of consolation to her, and then began reciting the prayers for the dying. Suddenly she raised herself up in bed. Cold perspiration flowed from her forehead. As if in despair, she stretched out her arms and cried aloud: 'I have made restitution; I have given it back.' At the same time she directed her gaze towards a vessel containing Holy Water on the window-sill. I understood her gesture, and at once sprinkled her with the Holy Water. She immediately became quiet. Shortly after she expired, whilst invoking the holy name of Jesus. I have seen many people die; this death-bed scene, however, has imprinted itself in-

delibly upon my mind. Evidently the dying girl was tempted to despair by Satan, who reminded her of a sin she had committed against the seventh commandment. What a boon the knowledge of the Sacrament of Penance was to that good soul in her dying hour! Does not the incident also clearly prove the efficacy of Holy Water?" (*Messenger of the Sacred Heart for Ceylon, India.*)

Numerous dangers daily, nay hourly, menace our corporal no less than our spiritual welfare. Why, then, not avail ourselves of the powerful prayers of the Church by making frequent use of her sacramentals, particularly of Holy Water? Little children especially are exposed to dangers. They are inexperienced and, commonly, do not dream of the bodily dangers that menace them. Parents, at times, lack the knowledge to give adequate protection to their children. How many, too, are the dangers that threaten the *spiritual* welfare of children! With the best of will it is often impossible for parents to give their children the necessary protection against such dangers. Let them, therefore, bless their children from time to time with Holy Water!

Not alone man, but whatever stands in relation to him, can be made to share in the bless-

ings of this sacramental. It is, therefore, the desire of the Church that the faithful use Holy Water frequently in their homes; also, that they sprinkle it upon their fields in order to ward off damaging influence and secure good crops.

That Holy Water is blest by the Church and placed within the reach of all, should awaken our reverence and gratitude. It is well for everyone to use this sacramental often. We cannot appreciate its efficacy too highly. Its salutary effects consist chiefly in the actual graces which we may obtain by means of it. These are illuminations of the mind and inspirations of the Holy Ghost which help us to perform our vocational duties, to pray devoutly, to hear the word of God with profit, and especially to assist with due attention at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Or again, the pious use of Holy Water at times will obtain a deeper knowledge of revealed truths, and help one to see his faults and overcome them. Often, too, such graces will enable one to avoid an occasion of sin or break off a sinful friendship. The practice of blessing oneself with Holy Water will stimulate devotion and dispose the soul for an increase of divine love. These and many other actual graces Holy Water will secure, pro-

vided we use it in a spirit of faith and penance. Thus we shall be able to "draw water with joy from the Saviour's fountains," for the graces that we gain by a worthy use of the sacramentals, no less than those that flow through the channel of the Sacraments, have been merited by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ.

What a blessing it would be if water were to remind us habitually that the Precious Blood is applied to our souls indirectly whenever we make use of a sacramental, and directly in the Sacraments. Could anything show more clearly the desire of God for our salvation than thus making the incessant application of the Precious Blood possible to all? The resources of the infinite love of Jesus seem to give themselves without reserve: "What could I have done to my vineyard that I did not do?" The Precious Blood not only paid the full price of our redemption, but it likewise offers our souls the greatest possible strength and consolation in all our trials and sufferings. Let us, therefore, praise the Precious Blood with all the powers of our soul, and show our appreciation of its merits by making a frequent and devout use of Holy Water.

THIRD PART—THE PRECIOUS  
BLOOD



## CHAPTER I

### THE PRECIOUS BLOOD—A GIFT TO MANKIND

A poet dipped his pen in gold,  
The treasured riches of his mind.  
His lines were meaningless and cold  
As snowdrifts troubled by the wind.

He dipped his pen in blood. Each word  
Flamed out, imperishably strong.  
Through tears, I understood, I heard  
Life's throbbing rhythm in his song.  
—Louis Grenshaw Ray.

EVERYTHING may serve to increase man's supernatural love of God: "To them that love God all things work together unto good." If mundane creatures are to attain this God-given purpose in our regard, then must we strive to supernaturalize our thoughts, words, and deeds. As Christians, elevated to the order of divine grace, we can and should make all our conscious thoughts and desires supernatural.

The contemplation of the material world affords countless attractions to the intelligent beholder. The beauty of the natural and physi-

cal order, however, lies not so much in the material substances themselves, but rather in what is suggested or symbolized by them. True! When viewed in the light of revealed truth, all things lead Godward. Considered rightly, the material things of this world, no less than things spiritual, bring us into closer touch with the all-good God. The contemplation, for example, of water in its various physical forms and states, is admirably calculated to remind us of a loving Providence; but who will deny that the symbolical and sacramental charms of water are far more varied and consoling? Any-one can easily find in the spiritual significance of material objects an inexhaustible treasury of elevating and inspiring thoughts.

In the apse of St. John Lateran—the mother-church of the world—there is a large pictorial mosaic. Its outstanding figure is the cross, having the mountains of Paradise in the background as its setting. From the peaks of these mountains flow streams of limpid water that meet in the smiling valley below and eventually form the River Jordan. Numerous birds of rich plumage lend life and color to the scene. Animals of the forest, herds of cattle, and flocks of sheep are grazing side by side in the lowlands, or slaking their thirst along the

banks of the silvery streamlets. Here and there amid the verdant shrubbery and wild flowers are seen groups of happy children at play. The placid waters of the Jordan carry crowds of cheerful voyagers to a pleasant harbor faintly outlined in the distance. Hard by is situated the City of God, which has the phoenix and palm-branches as its escutcheon. Celestial spirits and the Apostles are its protectors. Above the nine choirs of angels, the Holy Spirit—the bountiful source of the golden light and sweet peace that pervade the enchanting scene—seems to be inviting all to embark for the blissful abode of Heaven in the remote distance.

The artist who made this grand mosaic evidently wished to present a picture of the City of God, or the Church here on earth, fructified and made joyous by the living waters of divine grace. We, likewise, discern the function of the Precious Blood symbolized; for the Blood of Jesus Christ "makes this poor fallen earth more beautiful than the Paradise of old. Indeed, the rivers of Eden are not to be compared to it for fruitfulness. Streams of the Precious Blood are winding their way everywhere all over the earth." (F. W. Faber.)

To contribute to the glory of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is always a salutary act,

at least objectively. The Holy Innocents of Bethlehem are venerated as martyrs by the Church, even though they were incapable of formal devotion. They suffered death for the faith, and thus glorified Christ objectively. More fortunate than the Holy Innocents, we are capable of giving *formal* glory to Jesus Christ. And how could we do this more efficaciously than by honoring His Precious Blood? By doing so habitually, we could make our mortal life as far superior to a life of mere natural goodness as the effulgence of the noon-day sun surpasses the light of a fire-fly. "All mental acts of contemplation and adoration," says Cardinal Manning, "bring an increase of love into the soul of the least and the humblest, in the busiest and most overburdened life."

Our knowledge of God and the economy of His grace must needs be very incomplete without a knowledge of the Redemption; now, this sublime work of the God-Man was effected by the shedding of His Blood. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission" of sins (Hebr. 9, 22). Hence, "to understand God and God's world, we must look at Him and it from the Precious Blood point of view. The saints of the Church are the poets of the Redemption. It is from this point of view that they always see

the world. It was thus that Mary saw the world at all times, a vision most awful, yet most touching and most dear. It is the way in which God sees it at this instant. All things to Him, good or evil, are tinged with the Precious Blood." (Father Faber, p. 304.)

'Twas joy to behold them—  
The long beads of rain,  
That sang to my fancy  
A tender refrain.

The lawn seemed to quiver,  
And every new flower  
Looked brighter and fairer  
Because of the shower.

'Twas then I remembered  
Another soft rain,  
That beat on my spirit  
A prayerful refrain.

'Twas the merciful rain-fall  
That comes from above,  
The Blood of our Saviour,  
The heart-rain of love.

—Aunt Anna.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PRECIOUS BLOOD—GOD'S GREATEST GIFT TO MAN

WHEN we trace the bounteous streams of God's gifts to their ultimate sources, we find their origin in the "heart-rain of His love." The most eloquent expression of God's love is the shedding of His Precious Blood. With the aid of divine grace we will endeavor to stimulate our esteem and gratitude for this inestimable price of our salvation by striving to know it better.

We cannot, of course, obtain an exhaustive knowledge of the Precious Blood. That which we are able to learn about this mystery pertains to supernatural faith. "Our knowledge about a thing is in proportion to our understanding of its essence. Therefore, if the human intellect comprehends the essence of a particular thing, for instance, a stone or a triangle, no truth about that thing will surpass the capability of human reason. But this does not happen to us in relation to God, because the human intellect

is incapable by its natural power of attaining to the comprehension of His essence, since our intellectual knowledge, according to the mode of the present life, originates from the senses; so that things which are not objects of sense cannot be comprehended by the human intellect, except in so far as knowledge of them is gathered from sensible things. Now sensible things cannot lead our intellect to see in them what God is, because they are effects unequal to the power of their cause, and yet our intellect is led by sensible things to the divine knowledge, so as to know about God that He is, and other truths, which need to be ascribed to the First Principle. Accordingly some divine truths are attainable by human reason, while others altogether surpass the power of human reason."

(St. Thomas, *Summa Philosophica*, I, c. 3.)  
The nature and efficacy of the Precious Blood belong to the truths that surpass human reason. Hence, we can never know all that is to be learned about this greatest of God's gifts. On the other hand, we know that revealed truths cannot contradict human reason, since God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived, is the Author of both.

Although the Sacred Blood of Jesus Christ is a mystery and the most precious of divine

favors, still it is one of God's supernatural gifts to all men. "Christ died for all." As in the natural order light, air, and water are among the most essential as well as the most widely distributed material blessings, so in religion "it is His highest gifts which God bestows upon all men, and His peculiar gifts which He bestows upon the few. This is one of God's ways to be observed and made much of. His choicest things are the most universal. Now, the Precious Blood is the commonest of all supernatural things, the most accessible, and the most universal." (Father Faber, p. 350.)

During Holy Week the Church proclaims this same truth when she sings: "The earth, the sea, the stars, the whole world, have been washed in this flood. . . . The marvelous strength of love has washed the universe with Christ's Blood." Since the Precious Blood is so common and universal, it ought to appeal the more strongly to our love and devotion.

Some may fear being hindered in their other devotions were they to cherish the cult of the Precious Blood. It is true, in a certain sense, that "devotions stand in each other's light." But "there is no harm in this. It is blameless imperfection. But it is a peculiarity of the devotion to the Precious Blood that it does not in-

terfere with other devotions. On the contrary, it rather fosters them. For it is not only a devotion in itself, separate from other devotions and with a spirit of its own, but it is also a part of other devotions, a shape which many other devotions may assume." (*Ibid.*, p. 340.)

If we wish to advance in the knowledge of God, we are obliged to examine in detail things that pertain intimately to the Incarnation and the Redemption. Taken by itself, the mystery of the Incarnation is too vast and too deep for human contemplation. We must divide the life of the Word Incarnate into its principal periods. And how profound and inexhaustible the events of any one of these periods become! Often we are obliged to subdivide it, for we find that it is the only way to satisfy our desire of knowing our Lord better. Moreover, "by drawing out into strong lights the most intimate human realities of the Incarnation, it meets the false spirituality, which sometimes runs into heresy, about the Sacred Humanity. More especially does it war against that dangerous fastidiousness which even believers sometimes feel, through want of reverential discipline of mind, about the physical mysteries of Jesus. Reverence contemplates divine things and does not divert its thoughts from the

physical horrors in which, because of our sins, those divine things have deigned to manifest themselves. Magdalen holds Jesus by His feet, while the Gerasens entreat him to depart from their vicinity." (*Ibid.*, p. 336.) And who will deny that Mary Magdalen "chose the better part," while the Gerasens were guilty of a grave offense? Let us, then, approach the mystery of the Precious Blood with an humble heart and a docile mind, eager to learn it better, that we may love it more.

The deeper a mystery appears, the more profound should be our humble appreciation of it. "God changes His works without changing His counsels," says St. Augustine. But the change is in creatures, not in Him. Time cannot change God, because He is eternal; nor place, because He is immense; He cannot change within Himself, because He is perfect; He cannot be changed by any thing outside Him because He is almighty. His life is absolute repose, beatitude, simplicity, and in all this there can be no change. The very necessity which compels us to speak of God as if He changed, only brings home to us more forcibly the perfection of His tranquillity. Let us then boldly offer to His love these ignorant words; and, while they enable us to understand some-

what of the peculiar office and grandeur of the Precious Blood, let us lovingly adore that unchangeableness of God, which has lain for all eternity more unwrinkled than a summer sea, and will lie to all eternity, with almost infinite worlds round about it, and yet have neither current, stream, nor pulse, nor tide, nor wave, with no abyss to hold it, and with no shore to bound it, with no shadow from without, and no throbbing from within." (*Ibid.*, p. 110.)

The Blood that made scourges vermillion,  
Is worth more than all treasures combined;  
It ransomed sin-slaves by the billion,  
Restoring the hopes of mankind.  
The tiniest drop, if so offered,  
Could have cancelled an infinite debt;  
But the holocaust willingly proffered  
Was made—lest man should forget.

—Rev. P. J. Cormican, S.J.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PRECIOUS BLOOD—THE SUPERABUNDANT PRICE OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

WE read that Jesus Christ the Son of God came into the world “to give testimony of the truth,” and that “the Spirit testifieth that Christ is the truth” (I St. John 5, 6). “There are three that give testimony on earth: The Spirit, and the water, and the blood” (*Ibid.* 5, 8). And again: “This is He that came by water and blood”; and the beloved disciple is careful to add the words, “not by water only, but by water and blood.” Now, Jesus Christ is only one person; but He possesses two natures, the divine and the human. He is the God-Man. He is both the Creator and the Redeemer of the world. Jesus Christ is to be adored, therefore, as the Creator of water; and, because He shed His Blood for our salvation, He is likewise to be adored as the Redeemer of the world: We glorify Jesus Christ as coming “by water” when we acknowledge Him as the Creator of water, but we give Him still greater

glory by contemplating the second mode of His coming—"by the Baptism of Blood." "I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized: and how am I straightened until it be accomplished?" (St. Luke, 12, 50.)

How explicit the teaching of the Apostles, who were sent to preach the Gospel to the world! "You were not redeemed," says St. Peter, "with corruptible things as gold and silver, but with the Precious Blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled" (I Pet. 18, 20).

The Epistles of St. Paul, again and again, refer to the Precious Blood as the meritorious instrument of man's salvation: "Jesus Christ made peace through the Blood of His Cross, both as to the things that are on earth, and the things that are in heaven" (Col. I, 20). "All have sinned, and do need the glory of God. Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in His Blood, to the showing of His justice, for the remission of former sins" (Rom. 3, 23-25).

In his letter to the Hebrews, the Apostle writes: "Christ, being come a high priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more

perfect tabernacle, not made by hands, that is, not of this creation, neither by the blood of goats, nor of calves, but by His own blood, entered at once into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption. For, if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of an heifer, being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, by the Holy Ghost, offered himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God? And therefore he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of his death, for the redemption of those transgressions which were under the former testament, they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For, where there is a testament, the death of the testator must of necessity come in. For a testament is of force, after men are dead; otherwise it is as yet of no strength, whilst the testator liveth. Whereupon neither was the first indeed dedicated without blood. For when every commandment of the law had been read by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying: This is the blood of the testament, which God hath

enjoined unto you. The tabernacle also, and all the vessels of the ministry, in like manner, he sprinkled with blood. And almost all things, according to the law, are cleansed with blood: and without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9, 11-22).

Though God is absolutely unchangeable and, hence, unable to suffer, the God-Man, possessing a human nature, was capable of suffering. It was precisely and chiefly for this reason that the Second Person of the Holy Trinity became man. "It is from the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ alone that our salvation comes. Out of the immensity of its merits, out of the inexhaustible treasury of its satisfactions, because of the resistless power of its beauty over the justice and the wrath of God, because of that dear combination of its priceless worth and its benignant prodigality, we miserable sinners are raised out of the depths of our wretchedness, and restored to the peace and favor of our Heavenly Father. . . . As there is no earthly misery like sin, so is there no deliverance like that with which Jesus makes us free" (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 11.)

Although the shedding of the Precious Blood was a free gift, still it supplied a real need: "There was doubtless on the side of the

divine perfections such a propriety and fitness in the choice of an infinite sacrifice for sin, that it was in one sense necessary to have one. There were doubtless also, in the depths of the same perfections, reasons and fitnesses for the Precious Blood of the Incarnate Word being chosen for that sacrifice, which may form part of the blessed science of another life. Divine love, divine justice, and divine sanctity have necessities of their own, which do not interfere with their freedom." (*Ibid.*, p. 259.) The Angelic Doctor teaches the same truth when he says: "From the beginning of His conception Christ merited our eternal salvation; but on our side there were some obstacles whereby we were hindered from securing the effect of His precedent merits; consequently, in order to remove such hindrances, it was necessary for Christ to suffer." (*Summa Theologica*, P. III, 2, q. 48, a. 1.)

This need of a Redeemer was universal. The sin committed by Adam, the social head of the human race, "passed upon all, in whom all sinned." "As to the penalty of sin, man was chiefly bound to God as his sovereign Judge, and to the devil as his torturer, according to St. Matt. 5, 25: 'Lest perhaps the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver

thee to the officer,'—that is, to the relentless avenging angel, as St. Chrysostom says. Consequently, although, after deceiving man, the devil held him unjustly in bondage as to both sin and penalty, still justice required man's redemption with regard to God, not with regard to the devil." (*Ibid.*, q. 48, a. 4.)

"Christ's love was greater than His slayers' malice; and therefore the value of His Passion in atoning surpassed the murderous guilt of those who crucified Him: so much so that Christ's suffering was sufficient and super-abundant atonement for His murderers' crime. The dignity of Christ's flesh is not to be estimated solely from the nature of flesh, but also from the Person assuming it, namely, inasmuch as it was God's flesh, the result of which was that it was of infinite worth." (*Ibid.*, q. 48, a. 2.)

Christ was holy, innocent, and far removed from sinners. Even His betrayer gave public testimony to this fact: "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood" (Matt. 27, 4). "Hence Augustine says: The devil was vanquished by Christ's justice; because, while discovering in Him nothing deserving of death, nevertheless he slew Him. And it is certainly just that the debtors whom he held captive should be set at

liberty, since they believed in Him whom the devil slew, though He was no debtor." (*Ibid.*, q. 49, a. 2.) Now, since Jesus Christ "washed us from our sins in His Blood" (Apoc. 1, 5), His Precious Blood may be truthfully said to have wrested creation from Satan and reconquered Christ's sovereign lordship over it. Jesus Christ paid the price of our redemption to the Godhead by shedding His blood. By His Passion we are "delivered not only from the common sin of the whole human race, both as to its guilt and as to the debt of penalty, . . . but also from personal sin, when we share in His Passion by faith and charity, and the Sacraments of faith."

Even the prodigality of the Precious Blood corresponds to a need in man. In order "that we should have unrestricted, repeated, incessant access to the Precious Blood, that it should be to us more copious, more prompt, more at hand, more abundant than the waters of our wells and streams, that at every turn of life it should be conveyed to our souls by glorious aqueducts of divine invention, namely, the Sacraments, that it should be as common and as convenient to the life of our souls as the air is to the life of our bodies—all these wonders are

simply necessities to a wretchedness and a feebleness so utter and prostrate as ours. The sinfulness of sin causes us to require nothing short of this. Thus there are two prodigalities of the Precious Blood, both belonging to the adorable magnificence of God; but one of which is a simple necessity to us, while the other is a liberality of His magnificence, befitting His love, in keeping with His perfections, but not a necessity to us." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 255.)

Forth let the long procession stream,  
And through the streets in order wend;  
Let the bright waving line of torches gleam,  
The solemn chant ascend,  
  
While we, with tears and sighs profound,  
That memorable Blood record,  
Which, stretch'd on His hard cross, from many a wound  
The dying Jesus pour'd.

By the first Adam's fatal sin  
Came death upon the human race;  
In this new Adam doth new life begin,  
And everlasting grace.

For scarce the Father heard from Heaven  
The cry of His expiring Son,  
When in that cry our sins were all forgiven,  
And boundless pardon won.

Henceforth, whoso in that dear Blood  
Washeth, shall lose his every stain,  
And in immortal roseate beauty rob'd  
An angel's likeness gain.

Only, run thou with courage on  
Straight to the goal set in the skies;  
He who assists thy course will give thee soon  
The everlasting prize.

Father Supreme! Vouchsafe that we,  
For whom Thine only Son was slain  
And whom Thy Holy Ghost doth sanctify,  
May heavenly joys attain.  
—Vespers of the Feast, July First.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE GREATEST EVIDENCE OF GOD'S LOVE—THE SHEDDING OF HIS BLOOD

NOTHING in all creation affords stronger evidence of God's love for man than the shedding of His Precious Blood. Jesus is God, and we know that God is all-good. In fact, God alone is good, since He alone is goodness simple and absolute. "A thing is not said to have a quality by participation, except in so far as it bears some resemblance to the thing which is said to have that quality essentially; thus iron is said to be glowing in so far as it partakes of a semblance to the thing which is said to have that quality essentially, namely, fire. Now, God is good essentially, while all else is good by participation." That God is the good of every good is evident from the fact that "a thing is desirable for the sake of an end, and the aspect of good consists in its being desirable; therefore, a thing is said to be good, either because it is an end, or because it is directed to an end. Now, the last end is that from which all things

take the aspect of good, namely, God. Therefore, God is the good of every good. Hence, the Lord in promising Moses that he should see Him, said: 'I will show thee all good.' " (St. Thomas, *Summa c. Gentiles*, Vol. I, c. 40.)

Everyone who thinks logically will concede these metaphysical proofs for the essential and absolute goodness of the Supreme Being. They are unassailable. Many a one, however, would be tempted to ask for more tangible and concrete evidence of God's infinite goodness. But surely no one could wish for stronger proof of God's love than the Precious Blood. This gift implies the sacrifice supreme. There could be no greater.

Briefly and reverently we will now recall the principal occasions when Jesus actually shed His Blood for us. The seven recorded sheddings of Christ's Precious Blood are, *par excellence*, the Seven Wonders of the World. They are as far superior in atoning value to anything else in the way of expiation as the universe is greater in size than the smallest particle of matter. Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the ever-adorable Trinity, came into this world to be baptized by a Baptism of Blood. So great was His desire for this Baptism of

Blood that, already as an infant, He began paying the price of His Blood for our salvation.

In His maturity, whilst undergoing the Passion, the Saviour gives His Blood without stint or measure. As full-grown man we see Him deliberately going forward to that "Baptism of Blood" for which He came into the world. Contemplate Him, for example, during the agony in the Garden of Olives, when His soul was sad and sorrowful unto death and "His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground" (Luke, 12). "Drop by drop, unnaturally, through the burning pores of the skin, the beads of blood ooze out. They stand upon His brow, and then roll down His face. They clog His hair. They blind His eyes. They fill his mouth, otherwise than as the chalice of His Blood filled it three hours ago. . . . They mat His beard. They moisten His hands. They suffuse every limb as in a universal sweat of Blood. They stain His garments. They ruddy the olive-roots." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 267.)

O Precious Blood!  
Tingeing Gethsemane a crimson red,  
Whilst lanterns led  
On perfidy's path to One who stood, meek head

Bent for the kiss that sped Him to His death.  
Embrace, not born of love, but hell's hot breath.

—Catherine Hayes.

We can have no adequate conception of the pain and anguish suffered by Jesus in His sacred Passion. Behold Him, for instance, at that pillar of scorn and contempt! See how the hireling executioners, instigated by the high priests and Pharisees, deal blow upon blow, till our Beloved Saviour becomes an open wound from head to foot. From sheer exhaustion He at length falls in a pool of His Sacred Blood! Were we to see a brute animal thus cruelly treated, every fiber of our being would cry out in protest. Who would not do all in his power to protect or defend the poor victim of such brutality? How, then, can we remain unmoved when beholding Our Lord scourged from head to foot: "They have wounded Me, and counted all My bones."

The Passion of our Lord, 'tis true, is past in time. However, not only past offenses, but present and future sins also, were the cause of those cruel blows. This is why present sinfulness and impenitence, in a sense, scourges and crucifies Christ anew.

How consoling, on the other hand, for the penitent sinner to realize that "as Jesus was

then all red with Precious Blood there in the open place of Jerusalem, so are we in our Father's eyes at this hour; so shall we be in our happiness through all eternity, red, and red all over, with the glorious dye of the most Precious Blood. As Jesus was in His shame and misery, so shall we be in our glory and our joy, all beautified with Blood, that self-same Blood wherewith they clothed Him when they scourged Him at the pillar." (Father Faber, *ibid.*, p. 272.) Ah, dear Jesus, need we ask "why Thy apparel is red"? (Is. 63, 1.) May Thy royal garb of red incite us to deep contrition for sin.

It was not enough that those cruel executioners mocked and buffeted the innocent Jesus. Nor could the brutal scourging satiate their thirst for Christ's Blood. His aching head, too, must be made a fountain of the ruddy stream. Jesus must have a crown, for He is chosen to be the King of Sorrows: "And the soldiers, plating a crown of thorns, put it upon His Head" (John i, 2). "Long thorns go under the skin of the forehead, and come out above the eyes. Others penetrate the skull, and burn like prickles of fire. He trembles from head to foot under the intolerable agony. His beautiful eyes are clouded in pain. His lips are bloodless with

the extremity of endurance. . . . O Precious Blood! Lover of God's Dominion! Thou hast thirsted for Thy kingdom long; but with what strange and startling ritual hast Thou ordained Thy coronation!" (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 274.)

They called Him King, and then they pressed the Crown  
Of jagged thorns upon His blameless Head;  
There had been kings before, but none had bled  
From crowns they wore; in silence He looked down.

They laughed at Him, and in His Hands they placed  
A reed for sceptre, hailing Him as King.—  
A King of what? A King of everything  
That thinking men call good, and sweet, and chaste.

And as they danced, they sang a ribald song,  
And some tugged hatefully at His matted Hair;  
Until there was no semblance left for long,  
Of strength or manliness a man should wear.

They tied a blindfold over His Eyes—ah me!  
And struck Him from behind, and bade Him tell  
The name of the offender, knowing well  
That He was bound with cords; they could not see,

'Though they were not blindfolded, how He cried,  
With hidden Eyes to shield them from their shame,  
Who might have slain each blackguard, name by name,  
And leveled all the City in its pride. . . .

But now the Blood-drops dripped like falling rain—  
He was a King in truth—the King of Pain.

—J. Corson Miller.

There could be no procession comparable with the one that led from the Court of Pilate to Golgotha. There is none so replete with pain and anguish on the one hand, nor so glorious and triumphant on the other. Along the dolorous way “the wounds of the night’s arrest, and of the indignities before the high priests and in the yard of Herod flow silently with Blood. The weight of the cross opens them wider still, and increases the blood-shedding. It also disturbs the crown and keeps the wounds freshly bleeding; while the cross makes another wound of its own upon the shoulder, and is the cause of new wounds in the knees through the cruel falls which it occasions. Jesus leaves His footprints in the way, and they are of Blood. He imprints the likeness of His features on the napkin of Veronica, and the impression is in Blood. They that brush against Him, are stained with Blood. They that walk after Him dye their sandals in His Blood. His march to Calvary is a perfect triumph of the Precious Blood. It covers everything. It clings to the meanest objects. It seems to multiply itself.

. . . The Way of the Cross is a mystery of many objects, of constant movement, a transition from one mystery to another, and its unity is in its endless, manifold blood-shedding." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 277.)

O royal way!  
Paved ruby-jeweled for the King's advance  
'Neath blood-thirsty lance;  
Not stranger panoply sun's age-old glance  
Discovered. Scarlet throne His feet ascend,  
Begins His reign, vast kingdom without end.

—Catherine M. Hayes.

The many-headed mob, goaded on by the high priests and the Pharisees, and athirst for the Blood of their patient Victim, at length arrive at Golgotha's summit. The Innocent Lamb of God is about to be slaughtered in sacrifice. The cruelest treatment and vilest outrages have been reserved for this crucial hour. The Way of the Cross is ended. "It finishes in another shame, another stripping, another tearing open of the wounds of the scourging. It looks as if, to the Precious Blood, the scourging were its mystery of predilection. It returns to it again now, and, as nearly as possible, repeats it over again. The blood-shedding of the scourging was the most exuberant, the most vehement, the most penal, the most universal. Thus it co-

incides most with the genius of its love. Hence it will have it reiterated, so far at least as blood-shedding is concerned, at the foot of the cross." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 297.) And now,

Topping a flinty hill,  
A tree bursts scarletly  
To wondrous blooms, whose blossoming  
Flames through eternity,  
With sap that brims His cup for all  
Who broken cisterns flee.

—Catherine M. Hayes.

The Precious Blood has found a home—a home seemingly dearer to it than its source and shrine—the Sacred Heart. It is the hard wood of the cross to which Jesus is spiked, hands and feet. The last bleeding has now begun. How slowly the saving stream flows! "Nothing is moving but the Blood. Blood is life. It was within Him. Now it is almost all outside Him. His seven words are the voices of His Blood. With what a clear ringing sweetness they come forth, and the darkness around the mount murmurs with them as if it were tingling with delight! How beautiful are His thoughts on the Cross, beautiful like the beauty of God! Each word is a ravishing melody in which the Eternal Word expresses Himself with human ut-

terances." (Father Faber, p. 281.) Ah, what consolation to the poor crushed heart of the penitent sinner to hear those sweet words, "Father, forgive them"; or those others of still greater import: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise."

"The Precious Blood has come within reach of its end, so near it as to be impatient. It abandons the slowness of its oozing. It will be precipitate once more; and, as if to show that all shedding of itself, all surrendering of its precious life, was voluntary, it bids one cell of the Heart to keep what it contains, dislodges all the rest of itself with a loud cry of miraculous strength, and leaps forth at once from every cavern of the body; and death accomplishes itself, so far as it was a natural death, by the shedding of the Blood." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 283.) "It is accomplished!"—"Father," He exclaims, "into Thy hands I commend my Spirit!"

"The Heart had been bidden to keep some of the Blood within itself, and had obeyed. It was undecided whether to obey reluctantly or gladly. On the one hand it was the home of the Precious Blood, and loved it with the fondest love. To be untenanted by the Precious Blood, would be its uttermost desolation. Yet, on the

other hand, that Heart had learned the instincts of its inhabitant. . . . Hence follows the Seventh Blood-shedding, the Piercing of the Sacred Heart." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 292.)

Can it surprise us that the final battle against mankind's threefold enemy should be won by the Sacred Heart? "As the Head in the Crown-ing had been jealous of the Body in the Scour-ging, and so had claimed the joy and dignity of a Blood-shedding to itself, so the Heart was jeal-ous of the Hands and Feet. It envied them their dripping wells of life. It grudged them the beauty of their eternal stigmata. Even when dead, the Sacred Heart has irresistible attrac-tions. The Soul of Jesus beneath the earth felt the dear familiar constraints of that grand Heart; and so the Heart wooed the lance of the centurion, and the hidden Blood sprang forth, baptized as if in gratitude its heathen liberator with all the cleansing graces of con-version, and stole gently down the Side of Jesus, kissing the Flesh which it had animated so long." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 285.) "One of the soldiers with a spear opened His side, and immediately there came out blood and water" (John 19, 34).

"We often know men best by what they do

when they come to die. So it is with the Precious Blood; or rather we know it best by what it did when it was dead. It was so liquefied by love that death could not curdle it; and still it flowed, as if flowing were the unchangeable feature of its character. Death contents men. Hearts ask no further proof of love. Monarchs consider it the extremity of loyalty. Death contents God." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 284.) "The life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17, 11). "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15, 13). Yes! Christ's love is greater still—He died for enemy and friend alike!

From the gaping wound made by the soldier's lance there is now "just a visible oozing. The Precious Blood barely keeps itself red and blood-like. It flows very slowly, as if it would prolong its delight in flowing. It looks as if it were conscious of the grandeur of its work. This is redemption; this is the world-saving flow; this is the crown of all its flowings; this is the enduring and omnipotent shedding of itself, the end of the battle it has won for God; the final and total accomplishment of that array of eternal decrees which all along have clothed it like royal robes." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 292.)

The Divine Victim is immolated. All is accomplished. The powers of hell can harm Jesus no more. The last drop of His Blood has been drained. All has been given, and given with a love that knows no bounds. Christ's death is the outstanding fact of human history: "In the number of times that the Blood was shed, in the quantity shed, and in the mysterious manner of its shedding, it is the magnificence of God which is revealing the excesses of His love. Each Blood-shedding has its own way of touching our hearts, and its own attraction for our devotion. The whole Seven together have also a distinctive unity, and form a complete picture and a definite spirit in our souls." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 261.) Jesus Christ, the Son of God, "hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood" (Apoc. i, 5). "We have redemption through his blood" (Ephes. i, 7).

Ah, how dear to us should be anything and everything that reminds us of that inestimable price of our salvation! And surely nothing in all the world could recall the appealing scenes of the sacred Passion more vividly than the crucifix. How we should love our crucifix! "Men can lie for hours, and look upon a running stream. It seems to afford them at once occupation and repose. Its uninterrupted same-

ness fills them with tranquillity, while its unintermitting lapse gratifies their sense of life. They feel that they are thinking; yet they are hardly conscious of their thoughts. Their eye is fixed with a sort of fascination on the gliding waters, and they are soothed, rested, and engaged. This is a faint picture of what often happens to us when contemplating a crucifix. It is so familiar to us that, like the river, we understand it all at sight. We cannot reason about it. It is too much part of our daily lives for that. We do not need to elicit the right affections; for they come unbidden, and flow in an order of their own. The significance of the mystery is at once too deep and too plain for words. It is so vast an object of faith that simply to gaze upon it seems to be the broadest study of it." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 280.)

However, when we contemplate in detail the various kinds of suffering endured by Jesus Crucified, we are bewildered at His boundless love of us. Jesus in His Passion embraced generically every kind of human sorrow and suffering: "On the part of men He endured something from Gentiles and from Jews; from men and from women, as is clear from the women servants who accused Peter; He suffered from the rulers, from their servants, and from the

mob, according to Ps. II, 1 and 2: 'Why have the Gentiles raged, and the people devised vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes met together against the Lord and against His Christ.' He suffered from friends and acquaintances, as is manifest from Judas betraying, and Peter denying Him.

"The same is evident on the part of the sufferings which a man can endure as man. For Christ suffered from friends abandoning Him; in His reputation, from the blasphemies hurled at Him; in His honor and glory, from the mockeries and the insults heaped upon Him; in things, for He was despoiled of His garments; in His soul, from ~~sorrows~~, sadness, and weariness; in His body, from wounds and scourgings.

"Again, with regard to His bodily members: in His head He suffered from the crown of piercing thorns; in His hands and feet, from the fastening of the nails; on His face, from the blows and spittle; and, from the lashes, over His entire body. Moreover, He suffered in all His bodily senses; in touch, by being scourged and nailed; in taste, by being given vinegar and gall to drink; in smell, by being fastened to the gibbet in a place reeking with the stench of corpses which was called Golgotha; in hear-

ing, by being tormented with the cries of blasphemers and scorners; in sight, by beholding the tears of His mother and of the disciple whom He loved." (St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, Part III, 2, q. 46, a. 5.)

In the Sacred Passion we plainly see that God's "tender mercy is above all His works" (Ps. 144, 9). No suffering can be compared with that of Jesus Christ: "Great like the sea is Thy destruction" (Lament. 2, 1). As the waters of the sea are entirely salt and bitter, so the life of Jesus was filled with bitterness, and destitute of every comfort. . . . As all the waters of the earth meet in the sea, so all the sufferings of man were united in Jesus Christ. Hence, He says, in the words of the Psalmist: "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul." (Ps. 68, 1-3.)

Jesus suffered in His whole soul, as well as in His whole body: "It is written of Him (Ps. 87, 4): 'My soul is filled with evils'; upon which the gloss adds: Not with vices but with woes, whereby the soul, no less than the body suffers. . . . But His soul would not have been filled with evils except He had suffered in His whole soul." (*Summa Theologica*, P. III, 2, q. 46, a. 7.)

And this incomparable suffering Jesus

Christ endured for love of us. "He was offered because He willed it." "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins." And this most willingly. St. John says that Jesus called the hour of His Passion *His* hour; because, as a pious commentator writes, this was the moment of His life that was most earnestly longed for by Him. "To him who loves, the hour is dear in which he suffers for the object of his love, because suffering is the best way of manifesting one's love. (Ah, my tender Jesus, it was then, in order to show me the greatness of your love, that you would entrust the work of my redemption to no one else.)"

And to think that Jesus, the sovereign Lord of Heaven and earth, suffered all this for us, yea, for each one of us! His love is a personal love. "The love of St. Paul for Jesus was principally enkindled at the thought that He had died, not only for all men in general, but for him in particular; 'He loved me and delivered Himself up for me' (Gal. 2, 25). Each one of us may say the same; for St. John Chrysostom assures us that God loves each one in particular as much as He loves the entire world. Thus, each one of us is under no less obligation to Jesus Christ for having suffered for all man-

kind, than if He had suffered for any one of us exclusively. Now, if Jesus had died for one of us personally, leaving all others in original sin, how great would then be the extent of our obligations to Him? Nevertheless, we well know that we owe Him more gratitude for having died for all than if He had died for us alone. If He had died for us alone, would we not be grieved that our parents, relatives, and friends should perish forever, and that after this life we should be eternally separated from them? . . . Ah, my dear Saviour, I thank Thee! Thou hast done all this for me without being asked. Thou hast, at the price of Thy Blood, rescued not only me from death, but also my parents, friends, and acquaintances, so that I have reason to hope we may again be reunited and enjoy Thee for ever in Heaven." (St. Alphonsus Liguori, *The Clock of the Passion*, p. 17.) Grant, dear Jesus, that I may never prove ungrateful to Thee! Let me die rather than fall into sin again.

He who once, in righteous vengeance,  
Whelmed the world beneath the Flood,  
Once again in mercy cleansed it  
With the stream of His own Blood.  
Coming from His throne on high  
On the painful Cross to die.

Blessed with this all-saving shower,  
Earth her beauty straight resumed;  
In the place of thorns and briars,  
Myrtles sprang and roses bloomed;  
Bitter wormwood of the waste  
Into honey changed its taste.

Scorpions ceased; the slimy serpent  
Laid his deadly poison by;  
Savage beasts of cruel instinct  
Lost their wild ferocity:  
Welcoming the gentle reign  
Of the Lamb for sinners slain.

Oh, the wisdom of th' Eternal!  
Oh, its depth and height divine.  
Oh, the sweetness of that mercy  
Which in Jesus Christ doth shine.  
Slaves we were condemned to die!  
Our King pays the penalty!

Prince and Author of salvation!  
Lord of majesty supreme!  
Jesus, praise to Thee be given  
By the world Thou didst redeem;  
Who with the Father and the Spirit,  
Reignest in eternal merit.

—Roman Breviary (*Ira Iusta Conditoris*).

## CHAPTER V

### THE PRECIOUS BLOOD AND THE CHURCH

THERE is no institution on earth comparable with the Church. The Church is the work of Jesus Christ. It bears the seal of His Precious Blood on all its official acts. “The world,” says Father Faber, “is our Lord’s work as Creator; and our wretchedness did not find its prodigality of love sufficient. The Church is His creation as Redeemer; and it lies in furnaces of divine love heated seven times hotter than the furnaces of creation.” (*Ibid.*, p. 309.) “Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it.”—“He hath purchased the Church with His own Blood” (Acts 20, 28). “The Church, therefore, is the work of the Precious Blood. It was made by it, cleansed by it, adorned by it, propagated by it, and kept glorious by it. The Church is that portion of creation purchased by the Precious Blood out of alien possession, recovered from unjust holding, redeemed from slavery, conquered from enemies.” (*Ibid.*, p. 130.)

No one, therefore, who refuses to become a member of the Church, can expect salvation. "He who heareth you," said Jesus Christ, "heareth Me; and he who despiseth you, despiseth Me." Since the salvation of individual souls is effected by means of the Church, "the building up of the Church is one of the grandest works of the Precious Blood. The conversion of nations, the history of doctrine, the holding of councils, the spread of the episcopate, the influence of the ecclesiastical upon the civil law, the freedom of the Holy See, the papal monarchy . . . the filial subordination of Catholic governments—all these things alter the face of the spiritual world. Every one of them is a vast fountain of God's glory, and an immense harvest of souls, a prolific source of human happiness, and the antidote to a thousand evils. Above all things, the honor, the freedom, and the empire of the Holy See are the works of the Precious Blood." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 130.)

The Church, too, is world-wide and benevolent in its influence on human society. "It embraces all social life, and ennobles it by its embrace. It penetrates all private life, and sanctifies it by its penetration. It is the unity of all knowledge, and the harmony of all philos-

ophy. It is interested in all diplomacies, and it survives them all. Its minuteness allows nothing to be overlooked, while its comprehensiveness includes everything within its influence. In a word, the Church is that part of everything, that side of everything, that view of everything, that interference with everything, which represents the double sovereignty and jurisdiction of the Creator and the Redeemer."

(Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 313.)

The Church, too, is the most beautiful of institutions. The beauty of the Church—the King's daughter—is of the soul and spiritual. It is "from within." No limits can be set to her possibilities. These, however, cannot be seen, much less appreciated, by the man devoid of faith. "The depths of the Church, like the depths of the ocean, are fields of wild flowery loveliness, strangely lighted by the sun through the translucent waters; and thither the glory of God descends at twilight as He came to Adam, or at midnight as He came to Mary, or in the morning as He came to Israel in the wilderness, to pasture the beautiful flock of His perfections. The Church—it is the fairest of her splendors—is the mother of her Maker's glory." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 323.)

Thus does the Church labor unceasingly and

maintain its sovereignty. It is for the glory of God and the salvation of souls that it carries on its work. "It invades the kingdom of darkness and illuminates whole countries with the rays of its brilliant light. It puts down rebels, brings back exiles to their country, and reclaims wanderers. It re-establishes peace, grants amnesties, and wonderfully administers the kingdom which it has marvelously conquered. It is the crown, the sceptre, and the throne of the visible royalty of God." (Father Faber.)

The Church is not only the effect of the Precious Blood, but the Precious Blood, in turn, sustains and nourishes the Church. How magnificent this life-giving and invigorating flood that issues from the riven side of Jesus! "With Thee is the fountain of Life" (Ps. 35, 10).

"There is something almost indiscriminate in the generosity of the Precious Blood. It is poured in oceans over the world, bathing more souls than it seems to have been meant for, only that in truth it was meant for all. It appears not to regard the probabilities of its being used, or appreciated, or welcomed. It goes in floods through the seven mighty channels of the Sacraments. It breaks their bounds, as if they could not contain the impetuosity of its torrents. It

lies like a superincumbent ocean of sanctifying grace over the Church. It runs over in profuse excess and irrigates even the deserts which lie outside the Church. It goes to sinners as well as saints. Nay, it even looks as if it had a propensity and attraction to sinners more than to other men. It is falling forever like a copious fiery rain upon the lukewarm. It rests on the souls of hardened apostates, as if it hoped in time to penetrate. Its miraculous action in the Church is literally incessant. In the Sacraments, in separate graces, in hourly conversions, in releases from purgatory every moment, in augmentations of grace in countless souls, in far-off indistinguishable preludes and drawings toward the faith, this most dear Blood of Jesus is the manifold life of the world." (*Father Faber, op. cit.*, p. 48.)

Surely, no one can remain cold and indifferent toward such incessant and boundless love! How unutterably sad the complaint: "What profit is there in my Blood?" (Ps. 30, 9.) No one wishes to be an ingrate—receiving, but making no return. Let us, therefore, see how we may practise gratitude to that Precious Blood, which is now promoting our salvation in countless ways through the one true Church.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PRECIOUS BLOOD AND THE SACRAMENTS

#### *i. The Sacramental System*

AS IN the water-circulation of the earth is discernible an image of the blood-circulation in the human body, so, with the eyes of faith, we may see the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ circulating amongst the three branches of the one true Church of God. The Church, in a true sense, is a living organism. It is the mystical body of Jesus Christ, having veins and arteries that carry its principle of life to all its members. Among these channels of divine or supernatural life the Sacraments hold the first place.

The Sacraments are outward signs of inward grace instituted by Jesus Christ. The Church is their divinely appointed custodian and minister. The Sacraments form the very structure of the Church. The theology of the one throws light upon the theology of the other. We cannot understand the Church without a knowledge of her sacramental system. And since the

Church owes her origin to the shedding of Christ's Blood, we cannot advance in the knowledge of this inestimable price of our salvation without increasing our knowledge of the Sacraments—the divinely appointed means of applying the Precious Blood to our souls.

Whoever wishes to stimulate his devotion to the Precious Blood must strive, therefore, to have “a true spiritual discernment, a loving admiration, and an immense esteem of the grandeur, riches, and sweetness of the Sacraments . . . which are the inventions of God Himself. No creature could have devised them. I do not believe that, without revelation, the most magnificent intelligence of the angels could have imagined such a thing as a Sacrament. It is a peculiar idea of God. It represents a combination of His most wonderful perfections. It conveys to us in itself quite a distinctive notion of God. We already know God as the God of nature and as the God of grace. These are two different disclosures of Him to us. So the knowledge of Him as the God who devised the Sacraments, is another disclosure of Him. . . . God invented the Sacraments, that by their means He might impart His divine Nature to created natures, that He might justify sinners, that He might sanctify souls,

that He might unite to Himself the race whose nature He condescended to single out and assume to Himself." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, pp. 142 sq.)

Jesus Christ instituted them as instruments to convey the grace, merited by Him, into our souls. Now, "an instrument is twofold; the one, separate, as for instance, a pen; the other, united, as a hand; a separate instrument is moved by means of a united instrument, as a pen by the hand. The principal efficient cause of grace is God Himself, in comparison with whom Christ's humanity is as a united instrument. Consequently, the saving power must needs be derived by the Sacraments from Christ's Godhead through His humanity." (St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, P. III, q. 62, a. 5.)

Though it may be difficult to grasp the nature and effect of the Sacraments, there are analogies in the physical order that will help us to understand them. All of the Sacraments have something material as well as something spiritual about them. Of course, "a spiritual power cannot be in a corporeal subject after the manner of a permanent and complete power, but there is nothing to hinder an instrumental spiritual power from being in a body, in so far

as a body can be moved by a particular spiritual effect; thus in the human voice, when perceived by the senses, there is the spiritual power which arouses the mind of the hearer inasmuch as it proceeds from a mental concept. It is in this way that a spiritual power is in the Sacraments, inasmuch as they are ordained by God unto the production of a spiritual effect." (*Ibid.*, q. 62, a. 4.)

The effect of the Sacraments is twofold: It is related to the past and to the future. A Sacrament is a reminder of the past in so far as it is the application of Christ's Passion, and, because it imparts divine grace, it is a pledge of future glory. Sacramental grace "is ordained to take away the defects consequent on past sins, in so far as they are transitory in act, but endure in guilt; and, moreover, to perfect the soul in things pertaining to divine worship in regard to the Christian religion. But it is manifest . . . that Christ delivered us from our sins principally through His Passion, not only by way of efficiency and merit, but also by way of satisfaction. Likewise, by His Passion He inaugurated the rites of the Christian religion by offering Himself an oblation and a sacrifice to God (Eph. v. 2); wherefore it is manifest that the Sacraments of the Church derive their

power specially from Christ's Passion, the virtue of which is in a manner united to us by our receiving the Sacraments. It was in sign of this that from the side of Christ hanging on the Cross there flowed water and blood, the former of which belongs to Baptism, the latter to the Blessed Sacrament, which are the principal Sacraments." (*Ibid.*, q. 62, a. 5.) And because these two religious rites and ceremonies have a peculiar dignity and importance, we may be permitted to limit our attention chiefly to the two Sacraments in question.

The Sacraments, of which there are seven, have their medicinal and health-giving efficacy from the institution of Christ and the shedding of His Blood. Hence, these fountains will never run dry. Whether or not we drink the "living waters" which they provide, they will still flow on as long as there are souls to be saved. They are, either directly or indirectly, for the benefit of all.

And indeed, "the things that are common to all men are more touching than those which happen only to some. They are fountains of deeper feeling. They are more touching because they are more natural. They are diviner visitations, because they are more general. It is these things upon which the Sacraments

fasten with their instincts of love. The times, the vocations, the states, the crises of human life, these are all clasped together with the sevenfold band of the Sacraments." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 153.)

Every one of the Sacraments gives something that is common to all worthy recipients, namely, sanctifying grace. "Picture to yourself the wonderfulness of grace and its supernatural excellence, and then imagine the quantity of it drawn out of the perennial fountains of the Sacraments for the well-being of the world. It is an overwhelming thought. Grace is not only more abundant in the Sacraments, and more nimble, but it is also more sure, more invariable, more victorious. It is also more patient. Grace waits longer inside the Sacraments than out of them. They seem to detain it, to hold Heaven down upon earth with a sweet force, and so to multiply the occasions and prolong the opportunities of men." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 148.)

Besides sanctifying grace, each one of the seven Sacraments also provides special helps called sacramental graces. This actual or sacramental grace imparts something in addition to the grace of the virtues and gifts. "Grace, considered in itself, perfects the essence of the

soul, in so far as it is a certain participated likeness of the Divine Nature. And just as the soul's powers flow from its essence, so from grace there flow certain perfections called virtues and gifts into the powers of the soul, whereby these powers are perfected in reference to their action. Now, the Sacraments are ordained unto certain special effects which are necessary in the Christian life. Thus Baptism is ordained unto a certain spiritual regeneration, by which man dies to vice and becomes a member of Christ; which effect is something special in addition to the actions of the soul's powers. And the same holds true of the other Sacraments. Consequently, just as the virtues and gifts confer, in addition to grace commonly so called, a certain special perfection ordained to the powers' proper actions, so does sacramental grace confer, over and above grace commonly so called, and in addition to the virtues and gifts, a certain divine assistance in obtaining the (peculiar) end of the Sacrament." (St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, P. III, q. 62, a. 2.)

Each Sacrament is ordained to offer aid in a particular need, state, or crisis of life. One has been instituted for infancy, another for childhood, a third for mature age, a fourth for

spiritual sickness, a fifth to sanctify the increase of mankind, a sixth to secure a proper government to man, and a seventh to obtain a happy death for him. In virtue of the Almighty Word of her Divine Founder, the one true Church cleanses man from original sin by "the laver of water" in the Sacrament of Baptism; in the Holy Eucharist she nourishes his soul with the "Bread of Life"; and in the Sacrament of Confirmation she gives him the necessary strength to die, if need be, for the faith. Should a member of the Church be so unfortunate as to fall into a grievous sin, he can become reconciled with his heavenly Father through the Sacrament of Penance. To the Catholic Church has likewise been committed the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, which fortifies man with "the oil of gladness" for his death-struggle. The Sacrament of Matrimony, lastly, blesses the union of husband and wife, and the Sacrament of Holy Orders anoints the worthy candidate for the priesthood.

Jesus Christ said, "without me [*i. e.*, without my grace] you can do nothing." Nothing profitable for salvation, therefore, can be done without divine grace. Since the Sacraments are instituted to communicate grace, it is not only a privilege, but a duty to receive them. Without

the divine assistance provided in the Sacraments, mankind would soon degenerate to the plane occupied by the brute. Human society could not long exist without them. "Society would hardly credit to what an extent it is held together by the Sacraments. The influence of a single reception of a Sacrament may be handed down for generations; and the making of the destinies of thousands may be in its hands. At this instant by far the greatest amount of earth's communion with Heaven is carried on, directly or indirectly, through the Sacraments. There is a vast, wide world of sorrow on earth. But over great regions of it the Sacraments are distilling dews of heavenly peace. In the underground scenery of hidden hearts they are at work, turning wells of bitterness into springs of freshness and of life. They are drying the widow's tears, raising up unexpected benefactors for the orphan, nerving the pusillanimous, softening the desperate, rousing the torpid, crowning those who strive, and doing all things for those who die."

(Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 151.)

What folly, therefore, to esteem these fountains of life and joy lightly. What base ingratitude to neglect to receive them. "The Sacraments make no sorrows. They cause no

mourning. They create no darkness. Whereas they are forever creating gladnesses. Splendors flash from them as they move, and their splendors are all jubilees. They are fountains of happiness to all the earth. They cover even the monotonous sands of life with verdure, and make the desert bloom, and crown the hard rocks with flowers." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 152.)

Justly did the Prophet Isaias, foreseeing the salutary effects of the Sacraments, exclaim in a rapture of delight: "You shall draw waters with joy from the Saviour's fountains; and you shall say in that day, praise ye the Lord." And again: "All you that thirst come to the waters" (Is. 55, 1). To us Christians is given the blessed privilege to draw these waters with joy from the fountains of the Saviour. They are, indeed, supernatural springs of life-giving water established to quench the thirst of the human soul for temporal happiness and eternal bliss.

The Sacraments are the unfailing source of the spiritual life and supernatural activity of the Church. Without this exuberant source of life and vigor, the Church would be barren of good works; with it, she is as a beautiful paradise ever verdant with the most exquisite

flowers of virtue—flowers attractive and charming to the eyes of men no less than to those of the heavenly court.

Well may we, then, draw with joy from these life-giving fountains of the Saviour, which are intended by our Divine Lord to give supernatural life to our soul, balm to our wounds, light to our understanding, and fervor to our will. Thanks be to God for this inexhaustible treasury of divine grace! With St. Paul, let us “bless the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blest us with all spiritual blessings” through His holy Sacraments.

## *2. The Holy Eucharist*

### A. The Sacrifice of the Mass

Jesus Christ daily and hourly continues His sacrifice of the Cross in the Mass. He abides in our midst by means of His Sacramental Presence; and likewise, offers Himself as nourishment to our souls in Holy Communion. All this is made possible through the one true Church. Our Saviour “once saw the woods, and the mountains, and the lakes, and the foaming rivers, and the flowery plains, which He

had made, and He remained outside them, and gave them His paternal benediction. But when He had created the Church, not of earth and of His word, but of His Blood and Breath, its fair beauty so won upon Him that He came into it, and multiplied Himself." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 311.) This He continues to do by means of the Sacrament of the Altar, through the Sacrifice of the Mass and Holy Communion.

There is a most intimate relation between the Precious Blood and the Holy Eucharist. Devotion to the Precious Blood supplies us with an additional form of devotion to this greatest of the Sacraments: "The devotion to the Precious Blood in the chalice may be considered not merely as an additional form of devotion, but as an additional devotion to the Blessed Sacrament; while the special adoration of the Precious Blood, when we are kneeling before the tabernacle, is a form of devotion bringing much doctrine before us, and enabling us better to comprehend the august realities of that tremendous Sacrament." (Father Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 341.)

The Mystery of the Altar is above all a sacrifice—the Sacrifice of Calvary continued. The Precious Blood is shed mystically in every

Holy Mass. "The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ?" (I Cor. 10, 16.)

When vested priest,  
On ferial or feast,  
Is seen  
Beyond the pale  
Of hammered screen  
Or chancel rail,  
And when the chalice cup  
Is lifted up  
On high,—all Nations hail  
The Holy Grail:  
Wherein the Tide  
That ebbed in pain  
On Calvary's side  
When Christ was slain,  
Now flows again.  
For lo!—  
All Nations know  
This purpling flood  
Of sacrificial Blood  
Is verily the same  
That erstwhile welling had its start  
Within the realms volcanic of His Heart;—  
And glowing, flowed in fitful floods aflame,  
Like lava streams of molten love, down, down the  
Hill of Shame.  
And glowing still, it floods with never-ending flow:  
And knowing Nations know,  
This mystic flood

Of consecrated Blood,  
Is offered daily, as a clean oblation to His Name.  
—Rev. Gerald W. E. Dunne.

The idea of sacrifice is inseparably associated with the idea of man in his relation to the Creator; for “a sacrifice is a visible offering made to God in token and acknowledgment of His supreme dominion over all things and of our entire dependence on Him.” To offer sacrifice to the Creator is an essential duty of the rational creature here on earth. It is, likewise, the foremost and highest act of religious worship, whether private or public.

All men possess an innate disposition to offer sacrifice. From time immemorial mankind has presented this supreme act of worship to the Creator and Lord. Cain and Abel, Noe and his children, Melchisedech, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in fact, all the just of the Old Law offered sacrifice to Jehovah. Even the Gentiles—“those nations seated in the valley of the shadow of death”—preserved, together with the notion of a Supreme Being, the idea and practice of offering sacrifice.

In accordance with this inborn trait of His rational creatures, Almighty God approved of, and even prescribed certain kinds of sacrifices.

He appointed the times when, and the places where, sacrifices were to be offered, as well as their number and kind. But all the various kinds of oblations prescribed as sacrifices of the Old Law were but figures and symbols of the unspotted sacrifice of the New Law. Their chief end was to foreshadow the sacrifice of Calvary, and hence they ceased to be efficacious at the death of Christ, the promised Redeemer.

With the death of Christ, too, began the fulfillment of those memorable words of the prophet Malachy, "from the rising of the sun even to the going down (thereof) my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation" (Mal. I, 11). From the time when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, offered Himself on Golgotha as a propitiation for our sins, the Holy Mass became the one, public, enduring and substantial sacrifice, to be efficaciously presented as such to God alone.

Under the New Dispensation there is no sacrifice other than that of the Holy Mass, which is the very essence of religious worship and the one great source of true Christian life. Were the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass to be abolished, Christianity would be even less perfect than

Judaism. Take it away, and mankind would be left without any sacrifice whatsoever to offer its Creator and Lord.

Now, in what does the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass consist? "The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the perpetual sacrifice of the New Law, in which Christ offers Himself in an unbloody manner as He once offered Himself in a bloody manner on the cross." By its very nature, this Holy Sacrifice is the most appropriate and the sublimest offering which can be presented to Almighty God. Every sacrifice requires that a visible offering be made to the Sovereign Lord in token and acknowledgment of His supreme dominion over all things and of man's entire dependence on Him. Now, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass a visible offering of bread and wine is made to Almighty God; for, at consecration the substances of bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, Our Lord. The Son of God, therefore, who reduces Himself to a lower state and takes the humble form of bread and wine, is the Victim offered to the Godhead.

That which Christ began at the Last Supper, and completed on Calvary the following day, is now continued in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. "Take ye and eat, this is my body which

shall be delivered up" (on the morrow, by crucifixion).

"This is my blood that shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins" (on the morrow); "do this for a commemoration of Me."

The august and adorable offering of the Mass, is, therefore, the sacrifice of Calvary. Had our Lord not sacrificed Himself on Calvary, there could be no Sacrifice of the Mass; for on the altar Christ renews in an unbloody manner the same sacrifice which He offered up in a bloody manner on Calvary. Now He sacrifices Himself in an unbloody manner under the appearances of bread and wine. The victim is the same in both cases, but the manner and form in which the victim is offered differ. This is the reason why the priest, when he arrives at the most solemn moment of the Holy Mass, speaks not in his own name, but in that of Christ; when pronouncing those awful words, which change bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, the priest does not say, "This is the body of Christ," or, "This is the blood of Christ," but, "This is my body," and, "This is my blood." For the priest at the altar is an ambassador of Christ, a legate of the Son of God. He stands there at the sacrificial altar, not in his own name and person, but

chiefly and primarily in the name and person of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer and Mediator of mankind.

True, the Son of God is wholly and entirely subject to the will of the priest. In the august Sacrifice of the Mass, Christ, as it were, humiliates Himself and takes that form and place which the priest sees fit to give. The Council of Trent declares that "the same Saviour who was offered for us on the cross is immolated in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass by the ministry of His priests."

The power which the priest exercises in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is a power that God has withheld from His own beloved mother, yea, from every member of the angelic choir. "Oh, truly venerable," says St. Augustine, "is the dignity of priests in whose hands, as in the womb of the Virgin, the Son of God becomes incarnate." Great indeed, are the power and dignity of the priest, but incomprehensibly greater the sublimity and efficacy of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Never can man be sufficiently grateful for the goodness, wisdom, love, and condescension manifested by the Son of God in those blessed words, which He addressed to the Apostles and their legitimate successors when He said, "do

this for a commemoration of me." It is in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass that this divine injunction is observed. It is there that Christ, to use the words of St. Paulinus, becomes anew "the victim of His own priesthood, and the priest of Himself as victim." This holy commemoration of the great sacrifice on Calvary is as far superior to the sacrifices of the Old Covenant as the substance is superior to the shadow, the thing signified to the sign, the reality to the figure, Heaven to earth, and the Creator to the creature. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the most appropriate and the most sublime act of religious worship, since God is not only its end, but also the victim sacrificed. And because God is the victim as well as the end of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, it is easy to understand why this adorable oblation is a most meritorious offering. Yea, the Holy Mass is the most meritorious and efficacious sacrifice possible. There could be no greater!

As the renewal and continuation of the sacrifice on Calvary, the Holy Mass is, in the first place, a sacrifice of propitiation. By its means the Son of God applies the merits of His Passion and death to those for whom the Mass is offered, and, also to those present thereat. And if the atoning effect of that sublime sacrifice

on Calvary sufficed to wipe out the sins of all men and to re-open Heaven to mankind, what an immense amount of grace must the numberless repetitions thereof offered up throughout the world secure to mankind! Yes, it is Christ daily and hourly offering Himself anew to His Heavenly Father that stays the avenging hand of the Almighty and wards off the just punishment of an offended God. Who could form an adequate idea of that ocean "of vast satisfactions and of kingly expiations, into which the daily Masses of the Church outpour themselves, lighting the patient darkness under ground, flashing up to the skies as so much additional light and song, and beautifying the poor exiled earth in the eye of the all-holy heavens!" (Father Faber, p. 297.)

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is, also, a sacrifice of impetration, and that a most efficacious one, since its victim is God Himself, God the Son presenting our petitions in the form of a sacrifice to God the Father. And surely the Father could not refuse the wish made by His Son hanging on the cross! No! This Holy Sacrifice must needs be of infinite impreatory value.

Again, what a munificent sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving must the Holy Mass be! The

boundless resources of Heaven and earth are at the disposal of the generous Victim that offers Himself to the Godhead in this adorable sacrifice. What glory, then, must the Holy Mass give to the Creator! If the entire universe, with all its vast and incomprehensible grandeur, were to be offered in sacrifice, this would be a mere trifle compared with a single Mass. His only-begotten Son, who offers Himself daily on our altars, is infinitely more pleasing to the Heavenly Father than the entire universe.

The august Sacrifice of the New Law, then, is the perfection and crown of religious worship. It is the most pleasing offering which man can make to Almighty God, as well as the only sacrifice acceptable to Him. In this adorable sacrifice, and in this alone, all the cravings and aspirations of the just, as well as the rights and prerogatives of the Creator, are satisfied. A more meritorious or a more efficacious sacrifice could not be imagined, for its victim is an offering of infinite merit and value. For this reason, too, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the centre of Christian worship and the source of Christian life. Without the Mass the Christian religion would resemble a human body without a soul.

The Holy Mass is that golden bond which unites the Church militant with the Church suffering, and the Church suffering with the Church triumphant. Whilst Holy Mass is celebrated, the Church militant here on earth lies prostrate before the sacrificial altar of the Saviour, the Church triumphant descends from Heaven to adore in silent awe, and the Church suffering turns its gaze thither as toward the brightest star of hope that glimmers in the firmament of its gloomy prison.

Ah, what goodness and generosity on the part of Divine Providence to permit the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass to be daily offered in all parts of the globe. Well, indeed, could the Prophet Malachy proclaim of the Holy Mass in an ecstasy of delight: "From the rising of the sun even to the going down thereof my name is great among the gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation." Like the cheerful and life-giving sunlight this divine sacrifice encircles the entire globe, everywhere sending heavenward a clean oblation, and drawing earthward God's blessing upon mankind. By its means, too, the bodily and real presence of the Eucharistic Saviour is multiplied among us thousands and millions of times daily.

### B. The Eucharistic Presence

In every age of the Christian era there have been infidels and scientists, so-called, who openly denied the possibility of the Real Presence of the Son of God in the Sacrament of the Altar. It is impossible, they said, that the substance of bread and wine can be changed into the body and blood of a living person! How, then, can Jesus Christ be really and substantially present in a consecrated host? And with their shallow and specious arguments these blasphemers maintain that the doctrine of the Real Presence is not only impossible, but absolutely repugnant to reason.

What folly to imagine that it should be impossible for the Son of God, for Him who is all-powerful, to take up His abode wherever and in whatever form He wills! Surely He at whose bidding the stars leaped from nothingness into being, is able to change one thing into another. It is certainly easier to change a thing, than it is to produce something out of nothing. Moreover, why should God, the Creator of quantity and space, not be able to deprive a substance of the one, or even of both of these accidents? And why should not the sovereign Lord and Maker of substances as well as of ac-

cidents be able to change the former, and at the same time, leave the latter unaltered?

We find examples of something similar in the ordinary course of nature. The substance of an egg, for instance, is sometimes changed into the substance of a bird, although the accidents or appearances of the egg for a time remain. There can be no doubt, then, that God can convert the substance of bread and wine into the substance of His own body and blood, and, at the same time, leave the outward appearances and accidents of the bread and wine unaltered. The same Divine Person who made heaven and earth gave us the Holy Eucharist.

Some who admit the possibility of the Real Presence, find it difficult to believe in it. This class of unbelievers maintain that the infinite and almighty Creator of Heaven and earth would never assume the appearances of bread and wine at the bidding of one of His creatures —a poor, frail man! But surely this does not suppose a greater condescension or love on the part of Our Lord Jesus Christ than His debasement in the Incarnation. The Second Person of the Holy Trinity would have become incarnate if it had been to save but a single individual; hence, His Real Presence in the Holy

Eucharist is no less credible than His Incarnation. Both these mysteries—the Incarnation as well as the Real Presence—imply an infinite love and condescension toward man.

But is it only possible and probable that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is present in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist? No! It is absolutely certain. Long before the institution of the Holy Eucharist our Lord clearly promised and described this Holy Sacrament as His real Body and Blood. For example, shortly after nourishing five thousand men with five loaves of bread and two fishes, He said to them: "Amen, amen, I say unto you; you seek Me, not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves and are filled"; then, raising their minds from the natural to the supernatural, Jesus adds: "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give." Here, in plain and simple language, the Saviour promises to give "a meat" or nourishment which endureth unto life everlasting. And on another occasion He explains the nature of this nourishment still more fully with the words: "I am the living bread, which came down from

heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world."

In order, moreover, to make His meaning quite unmistakable, our Divine Lord suffers the Jews to murmur against His words, and to ask: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat and His blood to drink?" For they rightly understood Him to say that He would give them His real flesh and blood as nourishment —hence, their question. Now, what is the answer of Jesus to their objection? Does He, perhaps, correct them, or explain His meaning in another sense? No! He leaves them in the accepted interpretation of His words, and even emphasizes this meaning in the most solemn manner: "Amen, amen, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you, for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

At these words, so pregnant with meaning to all ages and generations, the Jews protest and murmur amongst themselves: "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?" A number of them abandoned Jesus and closed their minds to the truth. They had already denied His divinity, and now they disbelieved His teaching. Nor

does He call them back. He suffers them to misuse their freewill. He even turns to the Apostles and asks: "Will you, also, go away?" As if He would say: Let those of you who are unwilling to accept My words in their true and literal sense depart, for they are unworthy to be My followers.

And what could be more clear than those memorable words used by the Saviour of the world at the institution of this Holy Sacrament? The evangelists tell us that our Lord, on that awful eve of His Passion and death, at a time when His Sacred Heart was melting with compassion, "took bread, and blessed, and broke and gave to His disciples, saying: Take ye and eat; this is my body; in like manner, taking the chalice with wine in it, He blessed it and gave it to His disciples, saying: Drink ye all of this; this is My Blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sin" (Matt. 26, 28). Thereupon He empowered His disciples and their legitimate successors in the priesthood to renew the same miracle which He Himself had just performed: "Do this," He says to them, "for a commemoration of Me."

Must we not conclude from these words that the Son of God there and then fulfilled the

promises He had previously made regarding a spiritual nourishment for men? Yes, every sane man who gives this matter any thought at all must concede that Jesus at the Last Supper changed bread and wine into His own flesh and blood, and, thereafter, bestowed the power to renew this mystery upon His Apostles and their legitimate successors in the ministry. No other meaning can logically be drawn from the words which fell from the loving lips of the Saviour on the eve of His Passion and death.

And this, too, was the sense in which the Apostles and their successors in the priesthood have always understood the words of the Master. St. Peter spoke the mind of all the Apostles when he attested his belief in the Real Presence in that touching answer to the question of Jesus, "Will you also go away?"— "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast words of eternal life." How could we disbelieve Thee, who art Truth itself?

From the time of the Apostles down to the present it has been the constant teaching of our holy religion that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is really and truly present in the Holy Eucharist. This has ever been a fundamental doctrine of the Catholic Church, and the Catholic who

denies it ceases thereby to belong to the one true Church of Christ.

Throughout the centuries, moreover, the belief in the Real Presence of our Lord in the Sacrament of the Altar has been the inspiration of the arts and sciences. Their firm belief in the Real Presence is the reason why the Catholics of every century have outdone all other denominations in the grandeur and magnificence of their cathedrals. The Catholic does not look upon his church as a mere meeting-house, but as a temple of the living God!

A large number of miracles, too, are recorded which clearly attest the truth that Jesus is present in the Blessed Sacrament. Consecrated Hosts are known to have remained unconsumed in the midst of destructive conflagrations. Often the Sacred Species were beheld suspended in mid-air without any support save the monstrance. Again, the place where Consecrated Particles had been concealed was disclosed by a miraculous light. At times blood has been seen flowing from the Sacred Host. On various occasions, too, a little infant of celestial beauty was beheld in the Sacramental Species at the distribution of Holy Communion.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is therefore, as truly present in the Sacrament of the Altar as He is present in Heaven. By means of this Holy Sacrament, He fulfills His consoling promise, "behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Yes, our Divine Saviour is in the Blessed Sacrament as truly as He is present among the Saints of Heaven. There He is visibly present, here invisibly, hidden beneath Eucharistic veils. In the Sacrament of the Altar, 'tis true, God is visibly present only to the eyes of faith, yet in a most perfect manner. In the Old Testament God revealed Himself to man's reason, but mankind soon forgot its Creator. He then revealed Himself by His word, but mankind listened only with reluctance. Lastly God came in person and showed Himself face to face, but men crucified Him. Finally He resorted to this loving and perfect manner of revealing Himself to us by dwelling in our midst. This manner of abiding among us is the most becoming for God and the most meritorious for us.

Nothing is more painful to man than to be compelled to live apart from the object of his love! What goodness, therefore, on the part of Divine Providence to have instituted the Holy Eucharist, in which our Blessed Redeemer, the

most worthy object of our love and affection, is ever present in our midst. Yes, let Jesus in the tabernacle be the center of our affections, the sole object of our love, the one source of our hope, strength, and consolation.

### C. Holy Communion

The Holy Eucharist is the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine for the nourishment of our soul. So certain is this consoling truth that, were our Lord not present under the Sacramental Species, there would be neither a Divine Providence nor a God. We know from the revealed word of God that our Blessed Saviour instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist in order thereby to provide our soul with spiritual nourishment.

Jesus Christ made the very supernatural life of the soul and our eternal salvation dependent on the reception of Holy Communion. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." All, therefore, who wish to possess supernatural life and attain salvation, must from time to time approach Holy Communion. To the Jews, who murmured against the neces-

sity of receiving this Holy Sacrament, our Lord replied: "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood you shall not have life in you." From these words of Eternal Truth we learn that the reception of Holy Communion is as essential to the supernatural life of the soul as the taking of material food is to the natural life of the body. Just as the acquisition of corporal health and strength is impossible to the man who refuses to take bodily nourishment, so the acquisition of spiritual health and strength is impossible to him who neglects going to Holy Communion; yes, such a man will eventually lose the very source and principle of supernatural life, health, and vigor—sanctifying grace.

So needful, too, is the frequent reception of this Holy Sacrament that the Lateran Council declares it to be a mortal sin to postpone going to Holy Communion longer than one year. "All who have made their first Communion must approach the Table of the Lord at least once a year, and that at Easter time; and those who fail to obey this precept are to be excluded from the body of the faithful and deprived of Christian burial."

But it certainly would be very imprudent, and, in many cases sinful, to go to Holy Com-

munion only once a year. It is a serious mistake to think that one can live free from sin and advance on the path of virtue by going to Holy Communion but once or twice a year. "We give our bodies nourishment several times a day, and shall our souls receive nourishment only once a year?" asks St. Charles Borromeo.

The object and purpose of Holy Communion is to nourish us spiritually; hence, this Holy Sacrament, according to the intention of its Divine Author and the teaching of the Church, is to be received as often as possible.

St. Francis de Sales says that there are two classes of men who need Holy Communion—"the perfect, that they may not decline in perfection, and the imperfect, that they may become perfect." Hence, all who have attained the use of reason stand in need of this living Bread. And Ségur asserts that "he who censures the practice of frequent communion does the work of the devil."

Many Saints of every age, in obedience to the Church, have been frequent communicants themselves and zealous in urging others to become such. In the first centuries it was the practice of the faithful to communicate *daily*. During the time of the persecutions the practice of frequent Communion was urged with

emphasis and fervor. The late Pope Pius X succeeded in reviving the salutary custom of frequent Communion.

The effects produced by the worthy reception of Holy Communion teach us the same truth. According to the mind of Him who instituted this Holy Sacrament, we are to receive it often, yes, daily, if possible; for the immediate effects of a worthy Holy Communion are an increase of spiritual strength and holiness. This Sacrament cleanses the soul from venial sin and its effects.

It is, moreover, not only a nourishment for the soul, but likewise an effectual remedy against spiritual maladies. By uniting us with the very source of grace and holiness, this Sacrament lessens the force of evil concupiscence and the inclination to sin. Just as the woman in the Gospel was cured on account of the relation established by touching the hem of our Lord's garment, so, only more effectually, is our corrupt nature healed by the union effected between our Lord and us in Holy Communion.

For the same reason this Holy Sacrament is man's richest source of spiritual strength. A worthy Communion has greater power against the attacks of the destroying angel than had the blood of the Paschal Lamb sprinkled on the

door-posts of the Israelites. Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, said emphatically: "If any man eat of this bread, he shall not die." The Christian who makes proper use of the Holy Eucharist will not fall into mortal sin and lose the supernatural life of his soul. In Holy Communion the Blood of Christ is "the wine that maketh virgins." It is, as St. John Chrysostom assures us: "The devils tremble when they see our lips purpled with the Blood of the Lord in Holy Communion."

And this is easily understood when we remember that Holy Communion, more than any other Sacrament, increases God's grace in us. Besides many actual graces that enlighten man's understanding and strengthen his will, Holy Communion always and ever confers upon the worthy recipient an increase of sanctifying grace. In this Holy Sacrament man is united to the very source of all grace and holiness, Jesus Christ, the Lord of Heaven and earth. Just as the wild fruit-tree is improved and ennobled by being grafted on a cultivated tree, so is our human nature ennobled and raised to a higher supernatural order in Holy Communion. We are here assimilated to the person of our Divine Saviour and become one

with Him. We are changed, so to speak, into Jesus Christ; for, "he that eateth my flesh," said our Lord to the unbelieving Jews, "and drinketh my blood, abideth in Me and I in him"; and again, "he that eateth me, the same, also, shall live by me." In this Holy Sacrament, therefore, the worthy communicant becomes "a partaker," in the words of St. Peter, "of the divine nature."

And since Jesus Christ nourishes and vivifies us in Holy Communion, this Sacrament is a rich and perennial source of spiritual refreshment and consolation. "Here," according to the Angelic Doctor, "we taste spiritual sweetness and consolation at their true source." "St. Augustine, in one of those audacious realist phrases that his hot African soul delighted in, says that our souls are 'God's honey'—even so sweet to Him as honey is to our lips. So that Christ goes to Communion with us, just as we do with Him. Indeed, what else is Communion? It cannot be a one-sided thing. It is not the meeting and linking of two things of which one is inanimate, as though a ring were placed about a finger, a coat upon a back. We are alive; and Christ assuredly is alive. In Communion two persons meet and each gives and each receives, and both are in communion.

. . . You may go further, with St. Paul: As eating makes us grow, so to receive Christ makes us grow: but once more, Communion is not one-sided. By dint of our Communion Christ grows. He has not yet received, says St. Paul, the 'full stature of His maturity.' His body, that we progressively form by our incorporation with Him, shall grow till the end of time." (Father C. C. Martindale, S.J., in *The Catholic Times*, London, England.)

The more perfectly a man gives himself to God, the more does he receive from God. And let no one imagine that he ever gave as much as he could and should have given. "In a single Communion lies all grace; for in it is the Author and Fountain of all grace; and if the theological opinion be true that there is no grace in any of His members which has not actually been first in our Lord Himself, then all the grace of the world lies in one Communion, to be unsealed and enjoyed by the degree of fervor which we bring. The saints have said that a single Communion was enough to make a saint. Who can tell if any created soul has ever yet drained any single Sacrament of the whole amount of grace which was contained in it simply by virtue of its being a Sacrament? I would be inclined to think from

manifold analogies both of nature and of grace that no Sacrament had ever been duly emptied of its grace, not even in the Communions of our Blessed Lady." (Father Faber, p. 147.)

The better, therefore, one prepares himself, the greater, as a rule, will be his consolation. I say—as a rule; for at times the Lord withholds spiritual consolation from His servants. Even such as serve Him most faithfully have their periods of desolation. Still, even at these times will Holy Communion be beneficial; for it is here that those who are desolate and crestfallen can secure for themselves the necessary Christian resignation to make of their trial or affliction a source of merit for Heaven. It is through Holy Communion more than by other means that our Blessed Redeemer fulfills that consoling promise: "Come to Me all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."

And this not only in youth, but also in old age; not only during life, but also in the hour of death. St. Polycarp, that glorious disciple of St. John the Evangelist, when dragged in his old age before the Roman governor and condemned to be burned alive for practising the Christian religion, said to his executioners: "I am quite ready to die in testimony of the truth that I have borne Jesus Christ about with me

for seventy years. And to Him, who has strengthened and consoled me during life, I now turn for strength and consolation in death." How significant this brief utterance of the great Bishop of Apostolic times! How consoling the hope in such a source of strength!

Our trust, however, in God's promises and the efficacy of prayer must never become a false, over-confident assurance of salvation. None of the means of salvation offered by the Church may ever be undervalued, much less neglected. Conscious of God's magnificence and prodigality toward us, we should nevertheless "work out our salvation in fear and trembling." "Let us not imagine ourselves in a great wasteful sea of grace, in which we may move about as a fish moves about in the waters of the ocean, drinking when it will, but not requiring for its whole life more than a few sips of the unfathomable depths. The truth is that not a single grace comes to earth which does not come addressed to some individual soul, and is not noted by God, and has not to be given account for at the last. There is not one least grace, not one most transient inspiration, which is not part of God's accurate and orderly providence over each one of us for the salvation of our souls. Consequently there is not one

which can safely be neglected. We have no more grace than we require. St. Teresa tells us that, even where the grace of perfection is given, it is often necessary for mere salvation. As a theological speculation, we could be saved with less; but in practice we should be lost if we had less.

"Thus, while on the one hand, the masters of the spiritual life warn us not to attempt to go beyond our grace, they teach us still more emphatically that we must be faithful to the grace we have. We read that one Communion is enough to make a saint. So it is in itself; and it is important that we should know this, as it brings home to us the value of Communion. Yet, in fact, hundreds of Communions may in our case be practically necessary, not to make us saints, but just to save our souls." (Father Faber, p. 257.)

We may never, therefore, look upon any divinely appointed means of salvation as negligible. There is nothing superfluous in the order of nature; much less is this the case in the order of grace. "We have not a grace which we can afford to spare. Our frequent absolutions are not too frequent for us; nor are our many Communions, if under obedience, too many. One grace may be enough in itself to save a soul; but

it will not save it if it was not precisely meant to do so. It does not derogate from God's magnificence, that we should stand absolutely in need of its grand largeness. But the knowledge of this necessity gives us a truer view of our wretchedness, and fosters our humility. So also God's magnificence is not a perfection which rough-rides his exactness, his accuracy, his punctuality, his methodical minuteness, his jealousy of law, and his scrupulous distributions and proportions." (Father Faber, p. 258.)

Always and ever are we to press forward on the way to Heaven and strive to make the best possible use of divine grace with a loving fear lest we offend the all-good God, who offers it in such magnificent abundance. There is nothing that we should fear so much as the loss or neglect of divine favors. The frequent and worthy reception of Holy Communion will protect us against the abuse of grace, and thus we shall advance on the path leading to a happy destiny in the world to come.

If we endeavor to spend our life in fervent union with Jesus, surely He will not be unmindful of us in the hour of death. In the solemn moment of departure from this world, more than at any other crisis of life, man stands

in need of powerful assistance—of that supernatural strength which alone can fortify him for the awful rending of the soul from the body and all things temporal. In that dread hour the powers of darkness will seem to combine and make a desperate effort to drag our soul down into hell. There is no greater divine favor, then, than that of being united in the hour of death to the perennial Source of all strength and holiness.

In His last discourse on the eve of His sacred Passion and death, our Blessed Redeemer said to His disciples, and to us represented in them: "In my Father's house there are many mansions, and I shall go and prepare a place for you; . . . and I will come again, and will take you to myself, that where I am, you also may be." Oh, what a blessed and consoling promise!

One way that our dear Lord fulfills this promise is by means of Holy Communion. What greater certainty could man obtain concerning his future destiny than he has in the reception of the Holy Viaticum? One of our holy Communions will surely be our last. Let Our Lord be received each time as if He were coming to take us home! He who departs this life in the possession and company of his Lord and Redeemer, will surely possess and enjoy

Him for all eternity in Heaven. The devout and frequent communicant may have the firm hope that he will one day obtain this incomparable favor. He who in the days of health and strength fulfills his duty toward his Lord and God present in the Holy Eucharist, may cherish the moral certainty that Jesus will be His blessed possession forever in Heaven.

### *3. The Sacrament of Baptism*

On Holy Saturday and on the eve of Pentecost the officiating priest, when blessing the baptismal water, prays as follows: "I bless thee [water] by the living God . . . who brought thee forth, together with Blood, from His own side." St. Cyprian says: "From the open Heart of Jesus flows the stream that gushes into life eternal." Thus we are reminded to associate closely the benevolent gift of water and the Precious Blood that redeemed the world. Do not these divine gifts come from one and the same God of goodness and love—Jesus Christ, our Creator and Redeemer? Since both have their source in the eternal hills of a loving Providence, their grateful contemplation will direct our mind onward and upward to the all-good God.

Although all the Sacraments apply the Precious Blood to the soul, the Sacrament of Baptism is the first to do so. That the ceremony of Baptism is a real Sacrament but very few of those who profess to be Christians will deny. Three things are necessary to constitute a Sacrament—an outward sign, institution by Christ, and inward grace. As to the outward sign, there can be no doubt whatsoever. For the ceremony of Baptism has something perceptible, a sign, which consists in the pouring of natural water over the forehead of a living person, and the simultaneous utterance of the words, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Nor can there be any reasonable doubt in regard to the divine institution of this sign. The Sacrament of Baptism was instituted by Christ both by example and precept. He Himself, the all-holy God-Man, received Baptism. As if wishing to show that Baptism is a real Sacrament, he bade St. John perform this sacred rite over Him in the River Jordan. And shortly before His Ascension He commanded His disciples to go into the whole world and "baptize" all nations.

It is no less certain that the ceremony of Baptism, which was instituted by Jesus Christ and has been administered by the Apostles and their successors ever since, is the intrinsic cause of sanctifying grace. Man cannot by his own power produce divine grace, which is required to destroy sin and prepare him for "that kingdom into which nothing defiled shall enter." "No sin can be forgiven save by the power of Christ's Passion: hence the Apostle says (Hebr. 9, 22) that 'without shedding of blood there is no remission.' Consequently no movement of the human will suffices for the remission of sin, unless there be faith in Christ's Passion, and the purpose of participating in it, either by receiving Baptism or by submitting to the keys of the Church." (St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, P. III, q. 69, a. 1.)

We know from the revealed word of God that Baptism acts spiritually, as its sign, the pouring of water, acts materially. As water cleanses the body, so does Baptism cleanse the soul; and so effectually does this sacred rite cleanse the soul, that it takes away sin and the punishment due to sin. Baptism frees from the flames of Purgatory as well as from those of hell, and makes the recipient pure and holy in

the sight of God. This is done by means of sanctifying grace, which this Sacrament produces in the soul of the recipient.

"Water is the material principle of Baptism. . . . When the words are added, the element becomes a Sacrament, not in the element itself, but in man, to whom the element is applied by being used in washing his soul. Indeed, this is signified by those very words which are added to the element when we say: 'I baptize [cleanse] thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' " (*Ibid.*, q. 66, a. 1.)

The Angelic Doctor explains how Baptism cleanses the soul from sin thus: "As an instrumental power accrues to an instrument through its being moved by the principal agent, so does a Sacrament receive spiritual power from Christ's blessing, and from the action of the minister in applying it to a sacramental use. Hence, to quote the learned Bishop of Hippo: 'In Baptism, water ~~symbolizes~~ achieves the cleansing of the soul and penetrates every secret hiding place of the conscience; for, subtle and clear as it is, the blessing of Christ makes it yet more subtle, so that it permeates into the very principles of life and searches the innermost recesses of the heart.' " (*Ibid.*, q. 63, a. 4.)

Baptism furthermore effects in a true sense a spiritual birth, through which man becomes a child of God and an heir of Heaven. Just as man is born, in the natural order, a child of Adam, so is he reborn supernaturally in Baptism a child of God. For this reason, in former centuries none but the baptized were taught the Lord's Prayer, since they alone were deemed worthy of addressing God as Father.

Baptism also incorporates the individual in the mystical body of Jesus Christ. "The Apostle says (Gal. 2, 20) : 'And that I live now in the flesh; I live in the faith of the Son of God.' Now, life is only in those members that are united to the head, from which they derive sense and movement. And, therefore, it follows of necessity that by Baptism man is incorporated in Christ as one of His members. Again, just as the members derive sense and movement from the material head, so from their spiritual Head, *i. e.*, Christ, do His members derive spiritual sense consisting in the knowledge of truth, and spiritual movement which results from the instinct of grace. Hence it is written (John I, 14-16) : 'We have seen Him . . . full of grace and truth; and of His fulness we have all received.' The baptized are enlightened by Christ as to the knowledge of truth,

and made fruitful by Him with the fruitfulness of good works." (*Ibid.*, q. 69, a. 4.)

The Sacrament of Baptism, therefore, not only cleanses man from sin, bestows on him a right to Heaven, and incorporates him in Christ's mystical body, but it also confers the Holy Ghost. "Know you not," says St. Paul to the baptized, "that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Or, again: "Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you from God?" And St. John says: "In this we know that we abide in God and God in us; because He hath given us of His Spirit," namely, in Baptism. And the Apostle of the Gentiles teaches that we are "saved by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom He hath poured forth upon us abundantly, *i. e.*, 'unto the remission of sins and the fulness of virtues.' Therefore, the grace of the Holy Ghost and the fulness of virtues are given in Baptism." (*Ibid.*, q. 69, a. 4.) Consequently, Baptism is a real Sacrament, possessing as it does the necessary outward sign, the institution by Christ, and the inward grace or grace of justification.

Should the subject die immediately after being baptized, he would most certainly be saved; for the grace of Baptism takes away

personal as well as original sin, and, moreover, the eternal punishment due to sin. The "punishment of sin is twofold—the punishment of hell and temporal punishment. Christ entirely abolished the punishment of hell, so that those who are baptized and truly repentant should not be subject to it. He did not, however, altogether abolish temporal punishment. But He overthrew its kingdom and power in the sense that man should no longer be in fear of them: and at length He will altogether exterminate it at the last day. Hence, the difficulty in doing good, or that proneness to evil which all experience, remains in those who are baptized; not, however, through their lacking the infused habits of the virtues, but through concupiscence, which is not taken away in Baptism. But just as concupiscence is diminished by Baptism, so as not to enslave us, so also are both the aforesaid defects diminished, so that man be not overcome by them." (*Ibid.*, q. 69, a. 3 and 4.)

The very difficulty, however, of doing good and the proneness to evil peculiar to fallen nature can be made helpful to us spiritually. By means of the sacramental graces and virtues man can successfully overcome every kind of temptation and thus merit a greater reward

than if he had been free from the threefold concupiscence and the other trials consequent on original sin. "Original sin spread in this way: at first the person infected the nature, and afterwards the nature infected the person. Whereas Christ in reverse order at first repairs what regards the person, and eventually will repair what pertains to human nature. Consequently, by means of Baptism Christ takes away from man forthwith the guilt of original sin and the punishment of being deprived of the Heavenly Vision. But the penalties of the present life, such as death, hunger, thirst and the like, pertain to the nature, from the principles of which they arise, inasmuch as it is deprived of original justice; therefore, these defects will not be taken away until the ultimate restoration of nature through the glorious resurrection." (*Ibid.*, q. 69, a. 3.) Then "death shall be no more, nor mourning nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more" (Apoc. 21, 4).

Baptism, moreover, imprints an indelible character upon the soul. This spiritual sign marks off the baptized from the non-baptized. It is a power residing permanently in the soul. The character imparted in Baptism cannot be a passion, which is something transient; nor can it be a habit, for "no habit is indifferent to

acting well or ill; whereas a character is indifferent to either, since some use it well, some ill. Now this cannot occur with a habit: because no one abuses a habit of virtue, or uses well an evil habit. It remains, therefore, that a character is a power."

"The Sacraments of the New Law produce a character, in so far as by them we are deputed to the worship of God according to the rite of the Christian religion. Therefore Dionysius, after saying that God by a kind of sign grants a share of Himself to those that approach Him, adds, 'by making them godlike and communicators of divine gifts.' Now the worship of God consists either in receiving divine gifts or in bestowing them on others. And for both these purposes some power is needed; for to bestow something on others, active power is necessary; and in order to receive, we need a passive power. Consequently, a character signifies a certain spiritual power ordained unto things pertaining to the divine worship."

(*Ibid.*, q. 63, a. 2.)

That the Sacrament of Baptism is far superior to circumcision—its counterpart in the Old Law—cannot be doubted. "Grace was conferred in circumcision as to all the effects of grace, but not as in Baptism. Because in

Baptism grace is bestowed by the very power of Baptism itself, which power it has as the instrument of Christ's Passion already consummated; whereas circumcision bestowed grace, inasmuch as it was a sign of faith in Christ's future Passion. . . . And since Baptism operates instrumentally by the power of Christ's Passion, whereas circumcision did not, therefore Baptism imprints a character that incorporates man in Christ and bestows grace more copiously than did circumcision; since greater is the effect of a thing already present, than of the hope thereof." (*Ibid.*, q. 70, a. 4.)

We can easily understand, too, why water was made the material element of Baptism: First of all, water possesses a peculiar symbolic suitableness and is everywhere available. Again, this element seems peculiarly suitable because Baptism effects a regeneration unto spiritual life. "Seeds, from which all living things, namely, plants and animals, are generated are moist and akin to water. . . . Secondly, in regard to the effects of Baptism, to which the properties of water correspond. For, by reason of its moistness it cleanses; and hence it appropriately signifies and causes the cleansing from sins. Again, by reason of its coolness

it tempers superfluous heat; wherefore it fittingly mitigates concupiscence. And by reason of its transparency, it is susceptive of light; hence its adaptability to Baptism as the Sacrament of Faith." (*Ibid.*, q. 66, a. 3.)

Who, then, does not discern a loving Providence in the sacred rite of Baptism? This means of grace calls for our deepest gratitude. True, God has made the Sacrament of Baptism an absolutely necessary means of salvation, and some there are who die without it; but in civilized countries there can scarcely be any justifiable reason for anyone dying unbaptized. Surely, no Christian parent who has but the faintest spark of true love toward the immortal soul entrusted to him will neglect or unnecessarily delay the Baptism of his child. The stringent duty to have children baptized as soon as possible after birth flows directly from the indispensability of the Sacrament. The words of our Divine Redeemer are clear and imperative: "Amen, amen, I say unto you, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3, 5).

In a case of necessity, a few drops of water poured on any part of the body of a living person by anyone simultaneously uttering the

words, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," would suffice to give the subject this first and most necessary Sacrament. Of course, no lay person should ever attempt to confer Baptism except in a case of extreme necessity, for, the ordinary ministers of Baptism are the bishop and the pastor, and the proper place where this Sacrament is to be conferred is the house of God. In case a dying infant that had been baptized at home should survive, it is to be brought to church in order that the various prayers and ceremonies prescribed for solemn Baptism may be supplied.

In the case of adults who are to be baptized, "no special confession of sins is required. The general confession suffices which they make when in accordance with the Church's ritual they renounce Satan and all his works. . . . If, however, any persons about to be baptized wish, out of devotion, to confess their sins, their confession should be heard; not for the purpose of enjoining them to do satisfaction, but in order to instruct them in the spiritual life." (*Ibid.*, q. 68, a. 6.)

A practical Catholic will, of course, give preference to Christian names when choosing one for his new-born child. The name of a

saint who lived here on earth and is now in Heaven will be a constant reminder to its possessor of what he can and should become. The name of a saint is an inspiration to us all, since it reminds us of sublime ideals and heroic virtue.

And surely it is a most praiseworthy custom for the Christian to observe his name day or the feast of his patron saint. In Heaven, of course, one's birth-day and name day will coincide. There one's birth-day will be the day on which his patron saint will conduct his namesake into the realms of eternal bliss. The "*dies natalis*" of a saint is the day on which he passed from earth to Heaven.

In choosing sponsors at Baptism it must be borne in mind that certain persons cannot act as such. Canon 765 excludes the following: Persons who are not baptized; those who have no intention of discharging the office; infidels, heretics, and schismatics; the father and mother of the child; wife or husband (in Baptism of adults).

Baptism is, indeed "a greater, a diviner, a more magnificent work than the creation of the material world. . . . The creation of a new star every second of time would be but a little thing compared to the spiritual advantages of

a single Baptism. And these blessed waters of salvation are flowing perennially, so that if they would run together, they would form an immense stream. If we reflect upon this continuity and remember meanwhile the spiritual magnificence of Baptism, we shall be able to form some idea of the prodigality of the Precious Blood hidden in this holy Sacrament." (Father Faber, pp. 289 and 290.)

Whilst meditating on the exalted dignity conferred upon him in Baptism, St. Louis, King of France, once said: "I think more of the chapel wherein I was baptized, than of the Cathedral of Rheims, wherein I was crowned; for the dignity of being a child of God, bestowed upon me in that chapel, is greater than the dignity of being ruler of a kingdom. The latter I shall lose at death, the other will be my passport to everlasting glory." Yes, the passport to eternal glory, for Baptism is the door through which man must pass if he wishes to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

The sacred character of Baptism will, for all eternity, designate Christians as children of God, cleansed from sin in the laver of water through the merits of the Precious Blood. If we live as children of God and attain Heaven, it will be to our eternal glory; should we, how-

ever, forsake this fountain of living water, and incur the awful fate of the damned, this same sacramental character will be to our eternal disgrace. "The one and the same Baptism," says St. Augustine, "will be unto some life, unto others death."

The choice lies with us individually. The sacred mark which we have received in Baptism is a pledge of our divine sonship and a conditional right to Heaven. Nay more, it is an earnest of salvation; for as St. Paul says: "The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are [through Baptism] the sons of God; and if sons, heirs also; heirs, indeed, of God and joint heirs with Christ." What a glorious prerogative, to be a child of God and a joint heir with Christ to bliss eternal! Our endeavor, then, must be to "labor the more that by good works we may make sure our calling and election."

## CHAPTER VII

### DEVOTION TO THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

#### *I. Glorifies the Holy Trinity*

THE “ancient miracle” referred to in the Ritual for the Blessing of Baptismal Water, is repeated on countless occasions throughout the world. It is made to “shine forth” in and into the world in which we live. We can, if we will, bask always in its benign light and enjoy the liberty of the children of God. All are invited or commanded to pass dry-shod through the Red Sea of Christ’s Blood, out of a world of sin and death into the promised land of life.

Whatever in this world can promote our sanctification and prepare us for our eternal destiny has its efficacy from the redeeming Blood of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3, 25). This salutary stream is alive with the energy of God (Hebr. 9, 14), endowed with infinite holiness (Hebr. 13, 12), and worthy of supreme adoration (Apoc. 5, 9-12). The plant life of the

earth would wither and die if deprived of water and moisture; so, too, our souls would sicken and perish without the application to them of the blood of Jesus. Well may we then exclaim:

Hail, living Fountain, leaping strong and deep  
From Jesus' Heart! In copious sprays outfling  
O'er arid wastes, till barren deserts spring  
To blossoms fair that God shall fondly keep.

—Catherine M. Hayes.

St. Paul says that Jesus underwent His Passion and death "that He might sanctify the people by His blood" (Hebr. 13, 12). Now, the grace of God alone can sanctify man. Therefore, wherever grace is active, there the Precious Blood is active and holiness develops. "Whatever may merit, can merit only by coming in spiritual contact with the Precious Blood. In the seething mass of (meritorious) actions, it is the Precious Blood which is causing all the movement and fermentation. Wheresoever nature is raised above itself and lifted into the supernatural, there we discern infallibly the agency of the Precious Blood." (Father Faber, 300.)

After all grievous sin, original and personal, has been removed from the soul, one must labor at establishing an ever closer union with

God. "He that is just, let him be justified still; and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still." Devotion to the Precious Blood affords a most efficacious means of doing this. "But now, in Christ Jesus, you, who some time were afar off, are made nigh by the Blood of Christ" (Ephes. 2, 13). Let us, then, consider the spirit and fruits of the devotion to the Precious Blood. Its fruits, in fact, reveal its spirit, and to acquire and practise its spirit is to bring forth its blessed fruits in one's soul.

He who practises this devotion will become more and more spiritual; for this form of piety supernaturalizes all things. Our Lord chided those who sought signs and wonders, but He had naught but praise for Mary, who "chose the better part" and habitually nourished her desire for the supernatural. No one can grow in love and devotion to the Precious Blood without advancing in love and appreciation of the common, no less than of the extraordinary, things of faith; and this is to lead a spiritual life. "To them that love God all things work together unto good."

True love of the Precious Blood will infallibly develop greater fidelity in the performance of routine duties; and this, in turn, will engender a spirit of mortification; for it will

constantly bring before the mind "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." How could anyone be a follower of such a leader, and still be slothful and indolent? Indeed, if one's devotion to the Precious Blood does not develop the spirit of self-denial and compunction, it will lack something essential; if it is not accompanied by the spirit of sacrifice, it is spurious and superficial.

Lest we forget the spirit that animated the soldiers and sailors who fought, bled and died for our country, the State takes measures to perpetuate their memory. Every city in the land has memorial tablets and monuments commemorating its heroic dead. It is right that the patriotic services of national heroes be thus immortalized. The appreciation of national peace will be proportionate to the knowledge and esteem of the services rendered by those who defended it with their lives.

So, too, will our love for Jesus Christ increase in proportion to our growth in the knowledge of His sacred Passion and Blood-shedding. No one can be compared with Our Lord. The charity of Jesus Christ is far greater than that of all others combined. It is this boundless love and incomparable sacrifice of Jesus that the Church is constantly reminding us of, and their recollection begets nobility of

mind and heart. "All the forms, and images, and associations, and pictures of the devotion to the Precious Blood breathe sacrifice. Their fragrance is the odor of sacrifice. Their beauty is the austerity of sacrifice. They tease the soul with a constant sense of dissatisfaction and distrust with whatsoever is not sacrifice, and this teasing is the solicitation of grace. In time they infect us with a love of sacrifice; and to gain this love of sacrifice is to have surmounted the first ascent of holiness, and to be breathing the pure air and yet treading the more level road of the upper table-land of the mountains of perfection. It is the very mission of the devotion to the Precious Blood to preach a crusade against quiet sinless comforts." (Father Faber, p. 339.)

And there surely is a special need of this particular form of religious practice to-day. The devotion to the Precious Blood is, therefore, most opportune. It affords a protection against one of the most insidious dangers to the spiritual life, and, one may add, to eternal salvation. Jesus Christ said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." "If it were enough to have correct views, or devout aspirations, it would be easy to be spiritual. The touchstone

is mortification. Worldly amusements, domestic comforts, nice food, and a daily doing our own will in the lesser details of life, are all incompatible with sanctity, when they are habitual and form the ordinary normal current of our lives. Pain is necessary to holiness. Suffering is essential to the killing of self-love. Habits of virtue cannot by any possibility be formed without voluntary mortification. Sorrow is needful for the fertility of grace. If a man is not making constant sacrifices, he is deceiving himself, and is not advancing in spirituality. If a man is not denying himself daily, he is not carrying his cross. These are axioms which at all times offend our weakness and self-indulgence. But they are of peculiar importance in times like these, when comforts and even luxuries are almost universal. It is comfort which is the ruin of holiness. Gayety, fashion, ostentation, dissipation, frivolity, and the like are undoubtedly not the component parts of sanctity." (Father Faber, p. 337.)

Most of all does man's spiritual progress depend upon his devotion to the Triune God. We are taught to begin and continue all things "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Here again we can find a most efficacious aid in the salutary cult of the

Precious Blood. It surely is a good way of honoring the Heavenly Father. "Out of all possible creations God the Father chose the Precious Blood alone for the price of our redemption. Only its value could enrich the glory of the Creator, which the creature's sin had striven to impoverish. Only from its victory would He condescend to receive back the dominion of which He had been despoiled. Only its fulness could satisfy the claims of all His outraged perfections. Only its sweetness could make universal peace in heaven and on earth. It was to the Person of the Father, by appropriation, that this dear price of our souls was paid. Nay, our devotion to the Blood of His Son is only an imitation of the Father's complacency therein. It is His joy and His devotion. To join Him in this devotion to the Blood of His Son is in truth to practise a distinct devotion to Himself. Devotion to the Eternal Father! This is the sweet grace to covet. 'Show us the Father,' said Philip to his Lord, 'and it is enough for us.' " (Father Faber, p. 358.) It would seem, therefore, that there could be no better means of ingratiating ourselves with the Heavenly Father than by worshipping the Precious Blood. How elevating the thought that we can be devoted to the

very same object that God the Father holds most dear! Is there anything in all creation that is more precious in the Father's unerring esteem than the Precious Blood of His only-begotten Son?

I adore Thee, Blood of Jesus,  
Crimson bright, on Calvary's hill;  
In Thy Sacraments, dear Jesus,  
May it cleanse, sustain me still.

I adore Thee, Blood of Jesus,  
Shed for me, O Love Divine!  
And I'd gladly shed, dear Jesus,  
For Thee, every drop of mine.

Earthly loves all pale beside Thee,  
Cannot cheer my lonely heart;  
Thou alone canst win and bind me,  
Christ, my Love! the Better Part.  
—Sr. M. Agnes Finley.

Since the Holy Ghost sanctifies our soul through the instrumentality of the Precious Blood, it is plain that by associating the two in our love and esteem we honor also the third Person of the Holy Trinity in a special manner. Sanctification "is the transforming of the human or angelic into the divine. . . . It is the brightening and the beautifying of creation. It is the empire of light stealing upon the

realm of darkness, swiftly, variously, with beams and splendors, with transformations and effects, more marvelous than those of any lovely dawn upon the mountains and forests of the earth. It is the especial and appropriate office of the Holy Ghost, with the universal and invariable and inseparable agency of the Precious Blood." (Father Faber, p. 128.)

Through the Precious Blood the soul becomes more and more holy and beautiful; this is the instrument employed by the Holy Spirit to effect man's sanctification. "By the Precious Blood the Son became Redeemer, while by the same dear Blood reparation was made to the Father's honor as Creator and to the Holy Spirit's tender love as the Sanctifier of creation. He who in the Holy Trinity was produced and not producing became fertile by the Precious Blood." (Father Faber, p. 126.) What, therefore, could be more efficacious in preparing the soul for that kingdom into which nothing defiled shall enter, than its sanctification by the Holy Spirit through the power of the Precious Blood! And to cherish this truth is to give special homage and adoration to the Holy Ghost.

Most of all does devotion to the Precious Blood give glory to Him who shed it; in fact,

this devotion is the essence and motivating spirit of all true devotion to Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of mankind. How can one think of Our Lord without at the same time adoring Him as the Saviour of mankind? There exists, for example, the closest alliance between the devotion to the Precious Blood and the devotion to the Sacred Heart. "The Sacred Heart is the symbol of the Precious Blood; yet not its symbol only, but its palace, its home, its fountain. It is to the Sacred Heart that it returns with momentary swiftness, and assails it, as a child assails his mother for fresh powers, for new vigor, and for the continuance of its unwearied impulses. The devotion to the Precious Blood is the devotion which unveils the physical realities of the Sacred Heart; and the devotion to the Sacred Heart is the figurative expression of the qualities, dispositions, and genius of the Precious Blood—only that the figure is itself a living and adorable reality. The Sacred Heart of our Redeemer: yet it was not the Sacred Heart which redeemed us. It was precisely the Precious Blood, and nothing but the Precious Blood, which was the chosen instrument of our redemption." (Father Faber, p. 341.)

So, too, with the other special devotions to

our Lord and Saviour. Each one has its attraction and makes its appeal according to the taste and genius of the worshipper. They all reveal a peculiar greatness and loveliness of the peerless character of the God-Man. But, like the traveler who is finally led to the crystal fountain-head of the river he explores, all the various devotions to our Lord lead us gradually to their common source—the fathomless source of those streams of Blood that cleanse, sanctify, and beautify the City of God. The Precious Blood has an efficacy and majesty all its own, and, therefore, is the summary and quintessence of all devotions to our Blessed Redeemer—the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.

When we turn to God in prayer, it is well to steep and saturate all our petitions in the Precious Blood that wrought our salvation. The official prayers of the Church are presented to the Heavenly Father in the unceasing petition of His only-begotten Son. They have their efficacy chiefly from the impetratory power of the Blood of Jesus, shed actually on Calvary, and mystically in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. "It is a special office of our Saviour's Blood to plead. Its presence in Heaven is a power which nothing but omnipo-

tence exceeds. It was the power by which God redeemed man. It is the power by which man prevails with God. It was its oblation which, when actually offered, reconciled the offended Creator to his sinful creatures. It was the oblation the mere foresight of which made God overflow the world with mercies, and the imitation of which, in the blood of animals, was once the acceptable religion of the earth. It is the oblation in spiritual union with which all Christian oblations are efficacious now. It is the oblation, the real repetition of which on the altar is the continuance of the world's right to its Maker's forbearance." (Father Faber, p. 346.)

In all our prayers of petition we cannot do better than to keep this impetratory value of the Precious Blood in mind. It will stimulate our confidence as nothing else could. "And they overcame him [Satan] by the Blood of the Lamb" (Apoc. 12, 11). It is confidence in God's assuring promises that makes our prayers beholden to Him. "It is easier to love God than to trust in Him. In human things it is not easy to doubt and yet to love; but in divine things it is not uncommon. The greatest defect in our worship of God is want of confidence in Him. Confidence is the genuineness of wor-

ship and the tranquil plenitude of love. Now, what can give us more confidence in God than the study of the Precious Blood? Who can doubt Jesus when He bleeds? Whether we look at the grandeurs of the Precious Blood, or its liberalities, or its tendernesses, or its peculiarities, the result of our contemplations is a steadfast childlike confidence." (Father Faber, p. 350.)

And may we not believe that it was to give greater power to our prayers offered in honor of His Precious Blood, that the loving and merciful Jesus retained His stigmata? "He keeps them for the love of the Precious Blood, without which we could hope for nothing supernatural. Many single mysteries seem to tell me the whole of Jesus. But, if I were compelled to choose one thing only as being all memorials of my Saviour in one, I would choose this keeping of His stigmata. It signifies so many things, and it signifies them all so tenderly. . . . Jesus has described his whole Self, as in a concise Gospel, in this one act of keeping the stigmata of His blessed Wounds." (Father Faber, p. 287.) How could the Heavenly Father refuse our prayers addressed to Him in union with those of His Divine Son resplendent in the glory of His sacred wounds?

Every good prayer, of course, is salutary and meritorious. No prayer, so long as it is a good prayer, is without its reward. But not all prayers are equally good and efficacious; some are more agreeable to God than others. Since the Precious Blood has devotions of its own, the more our devotions resemble those of the Precious Blood, the greater will be their efficacy. Now, who can doubt that "its own devotion is devotion to the Church. It hastens, therefore, with promptitude to overwhelm our petitions for the welfare of the Church with an unexpected magnificence of fulfillment. If we pray for the extirpation of heresies, it is the glory of the Church which we are seeking. If we pray against schisms, it is for the peace of the Church that we are pleading. If we pray for Christian kings, it is the freedom of the Church for which we are interceding. If we pray for the missions, it is the fertility of the Church upon which we ask a blessing. If we pray for the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff, it is the sweet Spirit-guided will of the Church which we are assisting to its accomplishment. . . . In all these things we are exercising devotion to the Church, in which devotion the Precious Blood only waits our invitation in order to join us with impatient

love." (Father Faber, p. 347.) We are, therefore, to pray *for* the Church, as well as *with* the Church.

We may be certain also that the Precious Blood intercedes in a special manner for the poor misguided ones who are not profiting by its power to save them. Ah, how it longs to bring those other sheep into the one true fold, or to bring back "the lost sheep" that have gone astray! Hence, by interceding for such, our prayers take on well-nigh compelling powers. "Prayers for the conversion of sinners naturally seek their efficacy in the oblation of the Precious Blood. The Precious Blood shed itself for their conversion. Conversion is its principal occupation on earth. It is its own work more than it is ours. Used for this purpose, it is something more than intercession; it is the doing of the work,—at once the prayer and the answer to the prayer." (Father Faber, p. 346.)

Again, it is a most loving and Catholic practice to pray for the faithful departed. This form of intercession urges itself upon us at times by the claims of justice and equity no less than by those of charity. Surely, true love of the neighbor will prompt us to pray through the merits of the Precious Blood for the faithful departed. The dead themselves have a

tender devotion to the Precious Blood. "Souls in Purgatory have been allowed to appear and to tell how, in their patient land of woe, it is Blood, and only Blood, the Blood of the Adorable Mass, which can quench the flames. . . . The pictures which represent the angels holding chalices at the Wounded Side of Jesus, while Mary prays beneath, and then pouring those chalices into the fires of Purgatory, simply represent this Catholic truth as it exists in the sense of the faithful." (Father Faber, p. 346.) Intercessory prayer flowing from an ardent devotion to the Precious Blood, is, therefore, a most efficacious way of freeing our exiled brethren from that "prison from which no man goes forth till the last farthing is paid."

Therefore, let us have unbounded trust in the power of the Sacred Blood that is now aiding us to reach Heaven. If we trust in its power during life, it will be our support in death. "At last when it has led us to the brink of Heaven, . . . that Blood will flow round us, and sing to us beyond angelic skill, with a voice like that of Jesus, which, when once heard, is never to be forgotten, that word of Him whose Heart's Blood it is, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant! Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!' What is the life in Heaven but an ever-

lasting Te Deum before the Face of God? But there also, as now in our Te Deum on earth, we shall have a special joy, a special moving of our love, when we call ourselves ‘redeemed with Precious Blood’; and, as we do now in church, so there in the innermost courts of our Father’s house, we shall only say the words upon our knees, with a separate gladness, and a separate depth of adoration.” (Father Faber, p. 50.)

## *2. Consoles and Rejoices the Human Heart*

Rivers of Blood most precious the Saviour’s fountains give;  
With speedy steps run hither, O sinner’s soul, and live.  
Let all with thirsty longing that sacred draught drink in,  
That each may oft gain healing of all the wounds of sin.  
Unto that Saviour’s fountain betake thee then with speed,  
That on the sweets thence flowing thy inmost soul may  
feed;  
Purchased by the Blood’s shedding, the Fount of Life we  
see;  
May healing for thy sickness thence flow eternally!  
—From a Sequence of the Sarum Missal.

The greatest joy and delight of man here on earth is not even comparable with the least droplet of that infinite ocean of bliss caused by the Precious Blood of the glorified Saviour in Heaven. Ah, “who shall tell the nameless, im-

measurable joys with which the Precious Blood fills the Sacred Heart of Jesus? It cannot contain its own jubilee. It multiplies itself in order to relieve its exultation. It has inundated Heaven; but the vast shores of the empyrean confine it and restrain its floods. By the help of its omnipotence, behold! it escapes as if by miracle, sparkles in countless daily chalices on earth, and within the cup of each chalice it peacefully outstretches itself, unhindered in its infinity, with its grandeur enfranchised, and its love set free from all material laws. But the jubilee of the Precious Blood lies onward still and onward, whither we cannot explore it." (Father Faber, p. 239.)

The Precious Blood consoles and rejoices the human heart by removing sin, which is the sole cause of temporal and eternal misery. "The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1, 7). "But now in Christ Jesus, you, who some time were afar off, are made nigh by the Blood of Christ, for He is our peace" (Eph. 2, 13 f.). Let him, therefore, who is weighed down by the guilt of sin, repent and "pour out his heart like water before the face of the Lord" (Lam. 2, 19), that the peace of Christ may return and banish the disquietude caused by sin.

In practising devotion to the Precious Blood we make Jesus the cause of all our joy. We here get a taste of spiritual sweetness at its very fountain-head. In tracing the source of every best gift coming from above, we again find that we can go no farther than the boundless love that burst forth in that Fountain of Life. The exploration thereof, no matter how often made, is a source of the purest joy. What would we be were it not for the boundless love that prompted the shedding of Christ's Blood!

Of Christ's "fulness we all have received." Hence, when devotion to the Precious Blood is genuine it will, commonly, bring true joy and consolation to him who cherishes it. The reason is evident. Is not the cause of our salvation the shedding of Christ's Blood? And is not the Precious Blood the limitless "ocean of joy from which all other joys in creation come? It is through it that the immensity of God's gladness pours itself into all the universe. . . . All the joys, and they are numberless, which are still left in the fallen world, whether they be natural or supernatural, are in substance indulgences—indulgences which are granted because of the Precious Blood. Sinners on earth still have joys; they come from the Precious

Blood. Saints on earth are the gladdest of God's creatures. Their lives are all flight and song, like the hot-blooded lives of the birds of the air. All this gladness is from the Precious Blood. The Saints in Heaven are spirits deluged with joy, spirits whose quietness is transport and whose soberness is ecstasy. It is the Precious Blood which flows over them forever. The wide, widespread vastness of angelic jubilee, the thing likest to immensity of all created things, created to mirror the immensity of God, is all an emanation from the Precious Blood. Nay, it is a changeful, changeless sea, with tides; for there are daily, hourly increases of new joys in the angels from the conversions of sinners; and these conversions are precisely the operations of the Precious Blood." (Father Faber, p. 238.) May we not, then, rejoice, and "rejoice always" in the salutary and gladdening Blood of Jesus; yea, we may make it the cause of all our hope, as it should be the cause of all our joy. Deliberately not to do so would spell unhappiness in time and eternity.

Is not the very essence of spiritual joy a strong faith, a firm hope, and an ardent charity? The faith and conviction that our Redeemer died, ascended into Heaven, and is now making intercession for us; the firm hope that

our prayer for salvation, united with that of Jesus, will certainly be heard; and the love that deems no sacrifice for God too great? And surely, this increase of faith, hope, and charity may be had for the asking. No prayer could make a more touching appeal to the Almighty than one addressed to Him in the name of the Precious Blood. "It has a voice which God hears, speaking better things than the blood of Abel, more than restoring to Him again the lost music of His primeval creation. In our ears also does it murmur sweetly, evermore and evermore, in sorrows, in absolutions, in communions, in sermons, and in all holy joys." (Father Faber, p. 50.)

### *3. A Few Forms of Devotion and Indulgenced Prayers*

No prayers can be found more beautiful than those contained in the Missal or Mass-book used by the priest at the altar. Hence, the very best way to assist at the Holy Sacrifice is to "pray the Mass." There follows a translation of the Mass of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord, prescribed for the feast, which is observed throughout the Christian world on July first:

"Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, in thy blood, out of every tribe and tongue, and people and nation, and hast made us to our God a kingdom." The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever; I will show forth thy truth with my mouth to generation and generation.

Collect. Almighty, everlasting God, who hast ordained thine only-begotten Son to be the Redeemer of the world, and wast pleased to be reconciled unto us in His blood; grant unto us, we beseech Thee, so to venerate with solemn rite the price of our redemption, and to be on earth so defended by its power from the evils of this present life, that we may rejoice in its perpetual fruit in heaven.

Epistle. Heb. ix, 11-15, as on Passion Sunday.

Gradual. I John 5. "This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water and blood. There are three who give testimony in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that give testimony on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three are one." Alleluia, alleluia. V. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. Alleluia.

Gospel. John xix, 30-35. "Jesus therefore, when he had taken the vinegar, said: It is consummated. And bowing his head, he gave up the ghost. Then the Jews (because it was the parasceve), that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day (for that was a great sabbath-day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers, therefore, came: and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him. But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it hath given testimony, and his testimony is true."

Offertory. I Cor. 10. "The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?"

Secret. Through these divine mysteries may we draw nigh to Jesus, who is the mediator of the new covenant; and on thine altars, O Lord of hosts, may we renew the shedding of blood, which shall plead for us more than that of Abel.

## Preface of the Cross.

Communion. Heb. 9. Christ was offered once to exhaust the sins of many : the second time He shall appear without sin to them that expect him, unto salvation.

Post-Communion. We who have been suffered to approach thy holy table, O Lord, have joyfully drawn waters from the fountains of the Saviour : let His Blood be for us, we beseech thee, a fountain of living water unto life everlasting.

The reader is referred to a handy booklet by the Rev. Max F. Walz, C. PP. S., entitled "Manual of the Precious Blood"; besides a careful selection of approved prayers he will find therein the rules of the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood, a religious society that every adult Christian may and should join. Let us show our love and appreciation of the Precious Blood by being active members of this Archconfraternity. The Society is directed from the Convent of the Precious Blood, Carthagena, O.

Many of the prayers and devotions in honor of the Precious Blood have been endowed with indulgences. Thus Pope Pius IX granted, June 4, 1850, an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines every day of attendance at

the exercises of the month consecrated to the Precious Blood, *viz.*, July, no matter on what day the month be commenced, in any public church or oratory having due authorization, provided one have at least a contrite heart and devotion; a plenary indulgence, once a month, for attendance at the exercises ten times, under the usual conditions; three hundred days for each day of private practice of this devotion, at any time of the year, with at least a contrite heart and devotion; a plenary indulgence to those who, having practised the devotion for a month, shall, on the last day of the month, or on one of the next seven days, perform the usual conditions of confession, Communion, visiting a public oratory or a church, and praying there for the intention of the Pope.

The *Raccolta*, moreover, furnishes us with the tender Chaplet of the Precious Blood, for whose recitation Pope Pius VII granted, October 18, 1815, plenary and partial indulgences; with several indulgenced prayers, and with an indulgenced hymn.

“Glory be to Jesus!  
Who in bitter pains  
Poured for me the life-blood  
From His sacred veins.”

The following ejaculations are enriched with indulgences, and should be said at least twice a day—morning and evening:

“Most Precious Blood of Jesus, Our Lord, cry for mercy for us to Thy Divine Father, and deliver us from all evil.”

“Spare, O Lord! spare Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy Precious Blood.”

“Eternal Father, sign us with the Blood of the Immaculate Lamb, as Thou didst sign the dwellings of Thy people.”

“Eternal Father! I offer Thee the most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, in satisfaction for my sins and for the wants of Holy Church.”

## CONCLUSION

THE forms of devotion mentioned in these pages are but a few of the many that Christian piety suggests. Devotion to the Precious Blood, in any approved form, will surely lead the soul onward and upward to our true home—Heaven. In its ruddy glow all things take on a hopeful aspect. The sheen of its supernal splendor turns the eyes of the soul toward the Light inaccessible—the all-good God, who made us out of love and for Himself. “With an eternal love have I loved thee, and drawn thee to me.” This devotion of devotions “is the life of the living, and the thirst of the Holy Dead. It is the song of the angels. It was the light of all Mary’s darkness, and the jubilee of all her woes. It was the device of the Holy Ghost, and the devotion of His love. It was the devotion and singular possession of Jesus Himself. It was the devotion, the choice, and the complacency of the Eternal Father.” (Father Faber, p. 361.)

The devotion of the Precious Blood is better able than anything else in creation to reveal

the love, mercy, and goodness of the Triune God. This loving devotion shows, as none other could, "that the true significance of everything is to be found in the scheme of redemption, apart from which it is useless to discuss the problems of creation. It is a revelation to us of the character of God as well as of the work of Jesus. By bringing out the wonders of the Church and the energies of the Sacraments, it insinuates into our hearts the love of the sovereignty of God, together with a sense of perfect freedom and enlargement." (Father Faber, p. 336.)

How the contemplation of scenes in nature—for example, the sight of a lake, a sea, or the ocean—can suggest thoughts to stimulate devotion to the Precious Blood may be seen from the pious reflections of the saintly Father Faber, whose book on the subject has been quoted frequently throughout this treatise. "I was standing," he writes, "on the seashore and my heart filled with love it knew not why. Its happiness went out over the wide waters and upon the unfettered wind, and swelled up into the free dome of blue sky until it filled it. The dawn lighted up the faces of the ivory cliffs, which the sun and sea had been blanching for centuries of God's unchanging love. The miles

of noiseless sands seemed vast as if they were the floor of eternity. Somehow the daybreak was like eternity. The idea came over me of that feeling of acceptance which so entrances the soul just admitted into Heaven. To be saved, I said to myself, to be saved! Then the thoughts of all the things implied in salvation came in one thought upon me; and I said this is the one grand joy of life; and I clapped my hands like a child and spoke to God aloud. But then there came many thoughts all in one thought, about the nature and manner of our salvation. To be saved with such a salvation! This was a grander joy, the second grand joy of life; and I tried to say some lines of a hymn; but the words were choked in my throat. The ebb was sucking the sea down over the sand quite silently; and the cliffs were whiter and more daylike. Then there came many more thoughts all in one thought; and I stood still without intending it. To be saved by such a Saviour! This was the grandest joy of all, the third grand joy of life; and it swallowed up the other joys; and after it there could be on earth no higher joy. I said nothing; but I looked at the sinking sea as it reddened in the morning. Its great heart was throbbing in the calm; and methought I saw the Precious

Blood of Jesus in heaven throbbing that hour with real human love of me." (Father Faber, p. 240.)

Would that we all could thus behold the mystical and supernatural back of the charming and ever-changing scenes of this our temporal home!

\* \* \*

We have come to the end of "Fountains of Joy." However, we have by no means reached their profound depths and more hidden treasures. They are inexhaustible! Perhaps, the perusal of this book has roused a desire to know more about the sources of true joy; if so, a second, third, or even more frequent reading may prove of advantage. Or better still, why not turn to the original works used by the author? Why not follow these rivulets of joy onward to the vast ocean into which and from which they flow? "We must be continually replenishing the shallowness of our finite lives, and we can only replenish them out of the divine infinity. We cannot satisfy our thirst at any fountain less magnificent. It is a joy that will be eternal—which God's love added to His beatitude, that we should drink of those wells for evermore, and drink of them with liberty and gladness." (Father Faber, p. 302.) This must be so, for

nothing is superior to the human soul, with its wonderful faculties, save God who created it. We are made by the all-good God to know Him ever better, and to love Him ever more.

"All glory, then, and all worship be to that mysterious River of the City of God, whose Spirit-fashioned streams are carrying us this hour with such breathless swiftness to our home—our home with the Mortal Mother and the Unbeginning Father of the Eternal Son!" (Father Faber, p. 362.) Grant, dear Lord, that we may never forget the price paid for our salvation! Grant, too, that we may be instrumental in bringing the consoling knowledge of Thy boundless mercy and goodness to as many as possible and, finally, that we may offer eternal praise in Heaven to Thy Precious Blood, which wrought our salvation!

O. A. M. D. G.

## INDEX

### A

Air, Moisture in the, 22 sqq.

### B

Baptism, Sacrament of, 229 sqq.

Bentley, Wilson Alwyn, on  
Crystallization, 42 sqq.

Blood, The Precious, 143 sqq.,  
Consoles and Rejoices the  
Human Heart, 260 sqq.

Glorifies the Triune God,  
244 sqq.

God's Gift to man, 144 sqq.

Greatest Evidence of Divine  
Love, 148 sqq.; 163 sqq.

Hymns in Honor of, 180  
sqq.; 260.

Price of Man's Redemption,  
154 sqq.

Stimulates Confidence in  
God, 264 sqq.

Breviary, The Roman, Hymns  
from, 13, 37, 161, 180.

Brook, The, 56 sqq.

### C

Cataracts and Waterfalls, 63  
sqq.

Child, M.D., *passim*,  
On evaporation; 23, 27.  
On the atmosphere, 24 sqq.

Church, The, and the Precious  
Blood, 182 sqq.

Clouds, The, 26 sqq.

Communion, Holy, 217 sqq.

Coppée, François, "The River,"  
70 sqq.

Creek, The, 60 sqq.

Crucifix, The, 175 sqq.

Currents, in the Ocean, 21 sqq.

### D

Dawson, S.J., Father Charles,  
"The Wauna Creek," 60.

Deluge, The, 101 sqq.

Devotion to the Precious Blood,  
244 sqq.; 264 sqq.

Dew, The, 36.

### E

Easter Water, 110 sqq.

Eucharist, The Holy, 197 sqq.

### F

Faber, Father, *passim*, from  
his book, "The Precious  
Blood," 145 sqq.

Font Baptismal, Ritual Bless-  
ing of the, 108 sqq.

Frost, The, 38 sqq.

## INDEX

## G

Grace, Supernatural, 98 sqq.; 187 sqq.

## H

Harris, Dean, on "Suaharo Cactus," 54 sqq.

Holmes, Doctor, on "The Ocean," 72.

Holy Water, a Sacramental, And the Sick, 137.

At the Church Door, 133.

In the Home, 135.

Ritual Blessing of, 110 sqq.; 121.

Uses and Effects of, 122 sqq.; 128 sqq.

## I

## Ice:

Dry Ice, 49,

Formation of, 45 sqq.

Iceberg, The, 46 sqq.

## K

Knowledge, Gift of the Holy Ghost, 10.

Scientific and Revealed, 89.

## L

Louis, Saint, on Baptism, 242.

## M

## Magazines,

Our Young People, 9.

Schoolmate, 39.

The Mount Angel Magazine, 55.

The Guide to Nature, 44.

The Atlantic Monthly, 72.

The Ceylon Messenger of the Sacred Heart, 138.

Manitou, Colorado, 16 sqq.

Mass, The Holy Sacrifice of, 197 sqq.

Monument Park (Colorado), 16 sqq.

## O

Ocean-Currents, 21 sqq.

## P

Passion, The Sacred, 163 sqq.; 166 sqq.

Pentecost Water, 110 sqq.

## Poems, by

Aunt Anna, 147.

Sister M. Agnes, O.S.D., 26.

Blake, Vincent, 44.

Lord Byron, 74.

Campbell, Thomas, 105.

Coleman, P.S., 51.

Cormican, S.J., Rev. P. J., 162.

Drummond, Father, S.J., 40.

Dunne, Rev. Gerald W. E., 200.

Eustace, Father, O.F.M., 41.

Fariss, H. H., 58.

Finley, Sister M. Agnes, 251.

Gilbert, Ella Francis, 66.

Gould, Hannah, 78.

Hayes, Catherine M., 62, 166, 170, 245.

Mason, 40.

Massingham, 27.

Miller, J. Corson, 169.

Morris, 38.

Peirce, Emma, 57.

Ray, Louis Grenshaw, 143.

# INDEX

277

- Shelley, 28, 33.  
Southey, 63.  
Tabb, Father, 75.  
Wordsworth, 52, 60.  
Polycarp, Saint, 224.  
Precious Blood, The,  
    Indulgenced Prayers of, 264  
        sqq.  
    Mass of, 265.  
    The Seven Effusions of, 163  
        sqq.  
Presence, The Eucharistic, 209  
    sqq.  
Providence, Divine,  
    Examples of, 10, 14, 20, 26,  
        32, 45 sqq.; 216.

## R

- Rain,  
    Annual Rainfall, 33.  
    Causes of, 32 sqq.  
    Obtained in Answer to  
        Prayer, 34.  
Reverie, 76.  
Review, The Fortnightly, 35.  
River, The, 66 sqq.  
Ruskin, on the Clouds, 28 sqq.

## S

- Sacramental System, The, 187  
    sqq.; 237.  
Sacramentals, The, 107.  
Sacraments,  
    And the Precious Blood, 187  
        sqq.  
    Effects of the, 190 sqq.

- Nature and Efficacy of, 188  
    sqq.  
Sacred Heart, The, 171 sqq.  
Sacrifice of Mass, The Holy,  
    197 sqq.  
Sandusky River, The, 62.  
Science and Religion, 89.  
Siloe, Spring of, 99 sqq.  
Snow, The, 40 sqq.

## T

- Tabernacles, Feast of the, 99  
    sqq.  
Thomas, Saint, *passim*.

## W

- Wallace, Alfred E.  
    On the Earth's Contour, 14  
        sqq.  
    On the Earth's Temperature,  
        21 sqq.  
    On Evaporation, 22 sqq.  
Water,  
    Analysis of, 7.  
    And Religion, 90.  
    Distribution of, 8, 12, 55.  
    Drinking Water, 50.  
    Earth's Temperature and, 20  
        sqq.  
    Erosive Action of, 16.  
    Mineral Water, 53.  
    Origin of, 12.  
    Quantity of, 8.  
    Symbol of Truth, 92 sqq.  
    Symbol of Grace, 98 sqq.  
Waterfalls and Cataracts, 63  
    sqq.







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